

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 1911

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*) replied—

“Unfortunately the figures were not always separated in sections as is now being done, and they are not available for the whole period. The line from Townsville was commenced in 1883 and completed in 1883, and during that time the gross earnings were £104,951, and the net earnings £55,566. For several years after that the returns show the earnings from Townsville to the end of the line (Homestead, Torrens Creek, etc.), but the section Townsville to Charters Towers has been shown separately since 1902-03, and for the nine years since then the gross earnings have been £1,107,305, and the net earnings £546,745.

“The line to Mount Morgan has been opened for thirteen years, and the Kabra to Mount Morgan section has returned a gross revenue of £298,231, and a net revenue of £137,820. This does not include Rockhampton to Kabra, which is shown as part of the main line earnings.

“The net earnings given above are the gross earnings, less working expenses, but interest on capital has not been deducted.”

ALLEGED MISCONDUCT, WOOLLOONGABBA CRICKET GROUND.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Will he ask the Commissioner of Police to furnish a report on the results of police inquiries made a month ago into certain allegations of public misconduct at the evening race meetings at the Woolloongabba Cricket Ground?

“2. Will he table the report when obtained?”

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—

“No such inquiries were made by the police.”

LOCAL AUTHORITIES' LOAN ARREARS.

Mr. LESINA asked the Treasurer—

“1. Why has he neglected to take action under section 41 of the Local Authorities Act Amendment Act of 1910, under which it is provided that the Treasurer shall, in the months of February and August in each year, cause to be published in the *Gazette* a statement showing, with respect to every local authority and other public body to which a loan has been advanced by the Treasurer, the amount of money overdue and in arrear, and also the total of the principal sum then remaining unpaid?

“2. Can he give the House any idea of the total of instalments of interest and redemption in arrear as at the 30th June, 1911?”

The TREASURER (Hon. W. H. Barnes, *Bulimba*) replied—

“1. The hon. member will, I am sure, be pleased to learn that I have not neglected to take action under section 223 of the Local Authorities Act, 1902-1910.

“2. All the required information will be found in *Government Gazette* No. 54, published on 31st August, 1911, a copy of which I now lay on the table of the House.”

SHORTAGE OF PASSENGER CARS, CENTRAL DISTRICT.

Mr. CRAWFORD (*Fitzroy*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. Is he aware that complaints are being made about the shortage of passenger cars in the Central district?

“2. Is he aware that eight goods trucks were used for the conveyance of Mount Morgan people to and from Yeppoon on the

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER, 1911.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. D. Armstrong, *Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

PROFITS ON TOWNSVILLE AND MOUNT MORGAN RAILWAYS.

Mr. MULLAN (*Charters Towers*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“What is the gross and net profit on the following lines since the date of opening:—Townsville to Charters Towers, Rockhampton to Mount Morgan?”

occasion of the annual picnic held last week, although months of notice had been given by the picnic committee?

"3. Does he consider it fair to make the same charge for persons travelling in goods vans as for travelling in proper passenger cars?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. No.

"2. I was not aware of it; but it is probably correct. Carriages could not be sent all the way empty from Brisbane for one day's use.

"3. It is sometimes necessary to use trucks fitted with seats to carry passengers for special excursions and at holiday times, and this practice is not confined to Queensland. The fare charged for this excursion was 2s. 3d. for adults and 1s. for children, compared with 9s. 3d. and 4s. 9d. ordinary fare."

METHOD OF ANSWERING QUESTIONS.

Mr. LESINA asked the Premier—

"Will he consult with the Hon. the Speaker of the Assembly as to the advisability of printing the answers to questions of which notice has been given in the Journal of "Votes and Proceedings," each day, as is the custom in the New South Wales Assembly?"

The PREMIER (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*) replied—

"Yes."

DESTITUTION OF DISCHARGED NAVVIES.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*) asked the Premier, without notice—

"Whether he is aware that a number of men were recently discharged from the railway works at Pittsworth, and that they are now in Toowomba unable to obtain employment, and are without money and without food; and, if so, will he take steps to relieve their present necessities?"

The PREMIER replied—

"I was not aware of the circumstances; but, if such is the case, I will see that the necessary action is taken to relieve their present needs."

PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—Return showing diplomas granted by Charters Towers School of Mines up to end of year 1910.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

MINES DEPARTMENT—GOLDFIELDS.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*): At half past 10 o'clock on Friday last he had not completed his explanation of the vote he had moved in connection with "Goldfields."

Mr. MULLAN: You might recapitulate the information you gave.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He had no objection to doing that. The salary of the warden at Charters Towers was increased from £580 to £600, that of the mining registrar from £240 to £250, that of the assistant mining registrar from £180 to £200, and one of the clerks had his salary increased from £160 to £180. Mr. Weston's salary was raised from £100 to £110. The warden at Chillagoe, Mr. Tregear, had his salary increased from £360 to

£380. There was a sum of £130 for the mining registrar, Mr. E. R. Littler. The major portion of this vote was previously voted in connection with the Justice Department, but it now appeared in the Estimates for the Mines Department; the increase was only £10, the salary having formerly been £120. The warden at Cloncurry was appointed at £400, which was £100 less than was paid to the previous occupant of the position, the present officer being a junior officer. The mining registrar on that field had his salary increased from £200 to £210, and the chief clerk, which was a new appointment, received £180. Mr. Byrne's salary was raised from £120 to £130. At Croydon the warden, which was a new appointment, had his salary increased from £300 to £320. Mr. Curtis was appointed to Croydon at £60 a year less than his predecessor, as this was his first position as warden. The mining registrar there received an increase from £160 to £180, and the clerk's salary was raised from £70 to £80. At Georgetown, the warden, Mr. Ferguson, had his salary increased from £350 to £370. Mr. Ferguson was appointed at Georgetown at £10 a year less than his predecessor, though he was receiving an increase of £10 per annum. The mining registrar, Mr. Fraser, was increased from £180 to £200. At Gladstone the clerk received an increase from £39 to £60, a clerk having been appointed in place of a cadet. At Gympie Mr. Moran had been appointed mining registrar at £210, which was £40 less than his predecessor received. The bailiff, Mr. Maynard, was increased from £45 to £65; the increase of £20 was previously paid for the vote for contingencies. At Herberton the mining registrar received an increase from £280 to £300. A draftsman was appointed at a salary of £100, which was £80 less than was paid to his predecessor, his being a new appointment. The clerk, Mr. Flannery, was appointed at £170, which was £50 more than his predecessor received. At Mount Morgan the warden's salary was increased from £320 to £400. The mining registrar appointed there received £40 less than his predecessor. At Ravenswood a clerk was appointed at £40 a year less than his predecessor received. At Thornborough an assistant mining registrar was appointed at a salary of £130, which was £40 less than was paid to his predecessor. The differences he had enumerated were caused by the transfer of junior officers to positions which were aforetime held by seniors, who had been transferred and promoted. In connection with the inspection of mines, a new position had been created—that of State Mining Registrar—and it was just now being filled by Mr. Jackson, the Chief Inspector of Mines. Mr. Jackson's salary had been increased from £500 to £550, and he was assuming more responsible duties as State mining engineer. In connection with the inspectors of mines, Mr. Russell, of Charters Towers, received an increase from £380 to £400. At Rockhampton, Mr. Warde received an increase from £310 to £350. At Ipswich a new appointment had been made, that of Mr. Lawrie, at £350. At Gympie, Mr. Hunter received an increase from £300 to £320. At Cloncurry, Mr. J. A. Thomas was appointed there—a new appointment—at £300. Mr. Thomas was previously an assistant inspector at Ipswich at £220. At Croydon, Mr. Fryar received an increase from £290 to £300. At Charters Towers, Mr. Laun, assistant inspector, received an

increase from £220 to £230. Mr. Fletcher Young also received an increase from £220 to £230. A new appointment was provided for at £200 in place of Mr. Thomas, at Ipswich, which was £20 less than Mr. Thomas received. The position had not yet been filled, but it would be filled in a short time. In the geological staff, Mr. Marks, Assistant Government Geologist, received an increase from £320 to £350. His assistant, Mr. Smith, was increased from £156 to £176. Mr. Blake, another assistant, received an increase from £80 to £100. A junior officer received an increase from £50 to £60, and the caretaker, Mr. Sythers, received an increase from £150 to £170. The salaries paid to the draftsman and photographer disappeared from this vote and appeared in connection with the chief office. He moved that £23,361 be granted for "Goldfields," being an increase of £181.

Mr. MULCAHY (*Gympie*) was pleased to see the increases to the staff officers in the Geological Department. He would like to see more attention given to this particular branch of the department. (Hear, hear!) There was a wide field in Queensland, more than in any State in the Commonwealth, for this particular work. (Hear, hear!) They had in Queensland all the minerals that one could enumerate, and they had in Mr. Dunstan—so far as his observation went and what he could gather from men holding big positions in the other States—a man who was competent to fulfil the duties, and the very important duties, that he had to carry out. He was very pleased to hear the Minister say that this officer and other officers of that branch would receive consideration. He hoped that promise would be given effect to. Personally, he had always received the greatest courtesy and consideration from the Minister and officers of his department on the many occasions that he had to approach them in connection with matters appertaining to the mining industry. He regretted to see that there was not more being spent on the mining industry, because he knew that whatever money was spent it would repay the State tenfold. That was not the fault of the present Minister, as he was sure that if the Minister had his way he would rather spend more money on the mining industry than he was doing at the present time. When one considered the enormous wealth that had been won from the different goldfields in the State, one could only wonder why more attention was not paid to them than was the case. Take the two old goldfields—that great goldfield of Charters Towers came first and the old goldfield of Gympie came second on the list. Up till and inclusive of 1910 those two goldfields had produced gold to the value of £37,000,000. He had looked up these figures carefully and he believed them to be quite correct. That was a trifle over one-half of the whole gold production of the State. When they had two goldfields which produced wealth like that, then any little money which the Government spent on them in developing the deeper levels was money well spent. He was pleased that a little had been done in this direction, but he looked for a great deal more being done in the future. When one considered those two goldfields and the population they had carried for years, they would see that they deserved some attention. Regarding the mineral wealth of Queensland, they had only just touched the fringe of it, and they would have to spend more money to develop

such a great industry. Mount Morgan was a mine all to itself and was unique in its way, and it did not require that assistance which the older goldfields required. He had not much time to go into matters referred to in the annual report of the department, but he would like to make a few comments on matters that were somewhat of a local nature appertaining to Gympie rather than to the whole State. He wished to refer to the danger that existed to the men working in a prosperous mine in Gympie, and if something was not done it was likely to result in some serious injury to the men engaged in that industry. He had a great deal of experience himself as a practical miner and knew how the position stood. In the Scottish Mine some of the men had to work on 20-foot and 40-foot ladders. If members could imagine ladders fastened together and reaching to the top of the Parliament House ceiling, they would see the dangerous position these men had to work in. They had to place planks on the ladders at that height and start to work on the loose ground there. That was very dangerous. What they should do was to minimise the danger to the men as much as possible. When men were working on ladders lashed together in that way, they could not do much work. The ground should be filled up. He knew that there would be an initial expense in filling up the ground, but it would pay the company to do it, and it would be a safeguard for the men working there. He gathered the information from men who were leaving the mine. It was seldom they could get men working in a mine to say anything about it, but when they left a mine of their own accord they came to him and told him all about the conditions under which they had worked. Men had come to him during the last six weeks and pointed out the danger that existed in the Scottish Mine. They did not find fault with the amount of work that they had to do, as they were allowed to take their own time, but there was the danger that was attached to it. The men who were working beneath that roof at shovelling work so far below the roof were running a great risk. Fortunately—and he was pleased to say it—there had been no serious result from it so far. He was quite sure if the inspector, Mr. Hunter, received instructions from the Chief Inspector, Mr. Jackson, he would agree with him that the ground should be filled up.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Since the hon. gentleman gave the information to the Mines Department instructions have been given to the inspector to inspect and report to the department, and we are now awaiting that report.

Mr. MULCAHY: He was very pleased to hear it. Some might say that it would be a hardship on the management and that it would be an increased expense. It might be an expense for the time being, but it was just as easy to keep it filled up within 8 feet or 10 feet of the roof as it was within 40 feet. They could not go higher than 40 feet. He did not bring the matter forward with the idea of doing an injustice or to inflict any hardship on the company that was carrying on its work. He mentioned it both in the interests of the company and the men themselves. (Hear, hear!) He was glad to hear the Minister say that a report would be presented, and he hoped that action would be taken on that report. (Hear, hear!) He did not want to wait until there was a serious accident and then be told that he knew

Mr. Mulcahy.]

all about it. It was his duty to give warning of these things. (Hear, hear!) That was why he brought it before the House, and did not wait until after an accident took place, and then blame the company for it. He thought it was his duty, when he had information of that kind, to give it to the House, and he did so. He did not do it with the idea of interfering with the mining industry in any way. It would be better for the company and the miners. The great disaster at Mount Morgan was brought about primarily by not looking after the ground properly. Although they filled it up to some extent they altered the system of timbering. He was satisfied with the explanation the Minister had given

[4 p.m.] him, and he believed that action would be taken in this matter. There was another little matter that he wished to refer to, with regard to section 39 of the Mines Regulation Bill, which was passed last year. He had had a chat that morning with the Under Secretary, who gave him the fullest information. The matter of the charge made by licensed surveyors had been brought under his notice by a director of one of the mines in Gympie. Under the Mines Regulation Act, a mining surveyor could charge £5 5s. a day for making an underground survey. The Act provided that any competent person other than a mining surveyor could carry out that work. They had in Gympie a competent surveyor, who, he understood, did this work. There was no other person at present doing it, although he was given to understand that there were several who were competent to carry out the work. The wardens should be instructed that if there was a manager, or some other person about the mine, who was competent to make these surveys and plans, they should be allowed to do it, because in small mines, or mines which were making heavy calls every six months, there was to be a survey made and a plan sent down to the Under Secretary. He knew of a small company which was charged £16 16s. the other day for the survey and plan. He hoped that where there was a competent man available the Government would not stick rigidly to the licensed surveyor. The directorate or the manager of a mine should have the right, where there was a Government mining surveyor on the field, to apply to the Minister or the warden to put the mining surveyor on to carry out this work. He thought £3 3s. a day was a very fair thing, and many of our mining surveyors would be glad to do the work for that amount.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MULLAN: They are paying one of the best surveyors in Queensland £300 a year at Charters Towers.

Mr. MULCAHY (continuing): The regulation provided that the company should furnish them with certain information, but he wanted the Government to allow their mining surveyor on the different fields, if it did not interfere too much with their ordinary work, to carry out these duties—that was, if it was the wish of the mines. At Gympie the surveyor got £150 a year from the department; then he got the fees for the survey of goldfield homesteads, and so on, which brought his salary on that field up to a decent sum—it would run up to £500 a year. The shareholders in the companies had con-

[*Mr. Mulcahy.*]

fidence in the mining surveyors engaged by the Government. He would like to refer to a part of the Act which was coming into force next year, with regard to men who were qualified as managers through long service and where they had had twenty men under their control. On or before 1st July, 1912, they had to put in their claim. He knew there had been a number of claims put in, but he felt sure there was still a number of men who could qualify, and some of them might not know. His desire was to give every man who had had that service an opportunity to send in his application before 1st July, 1912, so as to enable him to get his certificate as a mine manager. He hoped that in the near future greater consideration would be given to the mining industry, owing to its value to the State. He did not look upon this in a party sense.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's further time had expired.

Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*) would like the Secretary for Mines to explain why the warden at Georgetown only received £370 per annum, while the warden at Gladstone received £450. In his opinion, the difference was too great. He believed there were more miners working on the Etheridge than there was in the Gladstone district altogether. He also wanted to draw the Minister's attention to the exemptions on the Etheridge. He was going to quote from newspapers circulating in the district, but before doing so he would quote from the report of the Under Secretary for Mines, page 71; this was contained in the report of the late warden for the Etheridge—

"At Gilberton there are thirty men leader hunting, with varying success. No work has been done on the Comstock lease—a remark, however, that also applies to most of the leases on this field."

No field could make progress if it was under exemption, and when the companies could not put the leases to some use, they should be forfeited in the interests of others who could put them to some use. One of the leases at Gilberton had been five years under exemption, and they had not done anything to fulfil the labour conditions. A correspondent writing to the *Mundie Miner*, of September 21, about Gilberton, stated—

"There is very little activity here. There are a number of areas of ground held under lease, and since the leases were taken up, three, four, and five years ago, there has not been a pick put into the ground. As this is essentially a poor man's field, it is aggravating for men who are anxious to raise a few ounces, and willing to work for them, to walk over ground and find leaders which they dare not work because of the leases held from year's end to year's end by men who only hold for a change in the market, do not fulfil any labour conditions, and probably would not know a pick from a plane if they saw one. Our late warden did his best to have leases forfeited where not worked, but his efforts were nullified by the Minister, who apparently, as long as the lease rent was paid, cared nothing for the labour conditions, and knew as much about mining as a tomcat knows of the game laws. If our member would withdraw his mind from the sugar controversy for a while and turn his attention to matters nearer home, such as I refer to, it would be better for the electorate he represents."

Then again, in the *Walsh and Tinaroo Miner*, dated 4th October, there was an article in the Etheridge district weekly edition headed "Current Topics." He had not

time under the Standing Orders to read the whole of the article, therefore he would have to take a part of it. Dealing with exemptions, it said—

"To remedy the evil, and endeavour to revive the gold industry of the State, the Minister for Mines would be well advised did he order a general overhaul of all existing leases in every goldfield, and ascertain the facts relating to each, whether worked or unworked, and, if the latter, the reason for same. Twelve months under the most extraordinary circumstances should be quite sufficient time allowed to any leaseholders. If no effort is made during that period forfeiture should cause, and someone else given a chance. Of course, we are aware that there are several ways in which the occupation of auriferous ground can be passed on, from one interested person to another of the same class, in almost perpetuity. One of the crowd, after hanging on to the ground by every known subterfuge, has to at last surrender it, to be at once applied for by a confederate, and so on. To our mind, the law should read that at the end of twelve months all leases, if no effort has been made to work them, even if held by two or more distinct holders, during that period, should be thrown open as ordinary claims only for at least three months, thus giving the ordinary working miner an opportunity to secure any area required on his miner's right. The idea of loss of revenue through leasehold rents under such a system should be dismissed from the mind, because the increased population, on an unlocked field, which would be created by miners trying their luck, would, directly and indirectly, more than compensate for the loss. Should no advantage be taken of such a concession, the land could then be reopened for leasing purposes. Such a course would give the miner his opportunity. Did he fail to take advantage of it, he would have no reason to complain or growl as deeply as he does at present. The case of the Gilberton leases, taken exception to by the residents of that field, might be dealt with by the Minister as an experiment on the lines suggested above."

He wished to draw the Minister's attention to those companies, syndicates, or individuals who only took up leases for speculative purposes, or, as the late Billy Browne, of Croydon, said on one occasion, "They seek to mine about 2 feet above the ground, in some other person's pockets, and who do no legitimate mining themselves." Neither the Etheridge nor any other field in the State could progress if exemptions were allowed on a large scale. The Minister should not take it as a good sign simply because those men paid so much per annum into the Treasury. It would be far better if those mines were unlocked and thrown open so as to allow the miners to get on to those leases and do something. Later on he might quote something of what the great Chillagoe Company was supposed to be doing. As one writer had pointed out, they were simply hanging fire, and later on they would make a big splash so that the country would have to pay a big amount of money when the country wanted to take over the Etheridge Railway. He hoped the Minister would take his remarks in reference to exemption into consideration, because it was very important for the miners in that district that something should be done. It was no use saying this company or that company had taken up hundreds of acres of leases unless they were doing some work on those leases. They could only develop a mine by work, and not by simply taking out a lease and then doing nothing with it. That system had been the curse of Queensland in the past. According to the report, the warden, on more than one

occasion, had recommended the forfeiture of those leases, recognising that by continually granting exemption he was blocking the working men, who more than likely would work the ground and assist in development taking place on that goldfield such as in the Durham and Great Wonder Mines. Mr. Danvers Powers and Mr. Rands had lately visited that field, and both of them were favourably impressed with its prospects. The Durham Mine had proved that gold existed at over 800 feet, which was the greatest depth at which payable gold had been got on the Etheridge. If the owners of leases which were down 150 feet were not prepared to work those leases, they should step out, or the Crown should forfeit the lease and allow other people who might be willing to speculate their money in the field to get possession. He had just been informed that Mr. Rands thought very highly of the Oaks Rush. The Great Wonder Mine, if it was in any other part of Queensland, or in Victoria, would be considered a very big proposition indeed, and they all knew that the Etheridge Field was well worthy of consideration. He did not ~~say~~ that the Mines Department had not assisted the Etheridge, because, to some extent, they had got practically all they had asked for, so far as grants were concerned. They had received £500 from the deep-sinking vote for the Durham Mine, and a fair amount of money had been spent on roads in different places to enable the miners to get their ore to the different railway stations at a less cost than previously. While the Minister had done fairly well, he (Mr. Collins) wanted him to do better, and do away with exemptions so as to open up the country in the interests of the miners.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*) asked for some further information in connection with the inspectors and assistant inspectors of mines. He found in *Hasard*, in reply to the questions he had asked, that three assistant inspectors were appointed during 1907—one in February, one in November, and one in October. One was appointed at £240 per annum, and two were appointed at £200 per annum. He would like to know how it happened that in appointing three assistant inspectors at the same time, such a distinction was made in their salaries? He was inclined to think, if the qualifications were considered fairly and honestly, both practical and theoretical, the men who got £200 were by far the best men. He also found that since then, the one appointed at £240 had been promoted to inspector, and his salary now stood at £300, while the other two had only received increases of £30. Since that time another assistant inspector had been appointed; his salary was fixed at £300, and he had now been promoted to inspector and transferred to another district. He did not hold a brief for any of these inspectors, and his only reason for bringing the matter up was that he liked to see fair play. They found the method followed by the Mines Department had been followed in other departments. Increases given to the higher-paid officers were about 10 per cent., and in some instances more than that, but when increases were given to the lower-paid men, it did not amount to 5 per cent. Those men went into the department with the idea that they would very quickly get promotion. It was not the monetary aspect of the position, because

Mr. Winstanley.]

some of them were earning as much money before they entered the department, so it was evident that they thought there was an opportunity inside the department for promotion as well as for an increased salary. As regarded the assistant who had been appointed at £240, and who was now getting £300 a year, he (Mr. Winstanley) had been informed that things were not in as good a condition as they ought to be in that particular district. It might be only a coincidence, but it was a fact none the less, that that particular inspector got three months' leave of absence and an assistant inspector was sent to that district who had had a rather difficult task, and he had not received the assistance he ought to have received in trying to get the Mines Regulation Act carried out. Taking everything into consideration, the fact that those assistants had practically a lifelong experience and had exceptional ability as far as theoretical knowledge was concerned—as they both held the diploma of the Charters Towers School of Mines—it did seem strange that men trained in the State, and having a thorough knowledge of the conditions of work in mining districts, should be passed over for men who had not had the same opportunities and who had not the same scientific training. There might be a satisfactory explanation for all that, and no one would be better pleased than he if an explanation could be given. Correspondence had been asked for in connection with promotions that had been made in other departments under the control of the Home Office. He was one of those who did not think, simply because a man had served a certain number of years in a department, that that entitled him to precedence over everyone else. He was satisfied that there were some men who gained more practical knowledge in four or five years than other men gained in a lifetime, and it had been stated on more than one occasion that the object of the department was to give an opportunity to men who had ability—energetic men who had some initiation—an opportunity of making their way, and it had been said that they should not be kept back by other men solely on the ground of seniority in the service. It had not been a question of seniority in the case of the assistant inspectors, and he certainly thought the Committee were entitled to an explanation.

Mr. FORSYTH (Moreton) agreed with the hon. member for Rockhampton in regard to the exemptions to mining leases on the Etheridge. If the people wanted to work the leases they should get them. That was a perfectly fair proposition, but unfortunately there were a great many leases which, even if they were surrendered to-morrow, would not be taken up, as no one was speculative enough to invest their money in them. The warden, in his report for last year, speaking of the field as a whole, said—

"Altogether 150 mines contributed to the total gold yield, as against 120 in 1909; and, roughly speaking, 600 men were engaged in goldmining, besides 284 in mining for other minerals. No dividends were declared, and calls made amounted to £3,628."

Mr. MULLAN: That proves nothing.

Mr. FORSYTH: Probably it did not prove very much to the hon. member, but if he was a shareholder in a company employing about 600 men, and not a shilling was paid in dividends by the company, but he was paying

[*Mr. Winstanley.*]

calls all the time, he would know all about it, and would consider that the fact proved something. If those mines did not pay—and we had the experience of 600 men who had been working the mines that they [4.30 p.m.] did not pay—then he would be a very speculative man who would tackle the mines after they had been worked for twelve months without paying anything at all. There were companies on that field—

Mr. MULLAN: How many?

Mr. FORSYTH: A good many. There were no less than 150 mines, and those mines were not in the hands of private individuals.

Mr. MULLAN: How many are under exemption?

Mr. FORSYTH: There could not be very many under exemption, because they employed 600 men.

Mr. MURPHY: Most of those mines are worked by syndicates and working miners.

Mr. FORSYTH: And the fact that the mines had been worked was very creditable to those men. But there was no information to show that they made even wages in working them. There was, however, information to show that the calls amounted to £3,632. On the Cloncurry Field there was a large number of mines which had been worked for a number of years. Huge sums of money had been spent on their development, but there was no possible chance of those mines ever paying unless the people were provided with the means of bringing their produce to market cheaper than they were able to do at the present time. He knew one mine on which £60,000 or £70,000 had been spent in development work, and spent in such a way as received the commendation of experts who visited the mine. That mine had been opened up as well as any mine in the Cloncurry district, and that company would be the means of employing hundreds of men if they only had the necessary means of communication in order to convey their produce to market at paying rates. The very best way in which the Government could assist mining fields was by giving them railways, so long as there was a likelihood of the railway paying. He did not believe in the principle of running a railway into every mining centre, because it was not every mining field that would warrant such a policy. There should be some prospect of the permanency of the field, and of the railway paying not only through the traffic received from mining but, in case of that traffic falling off, from the traffic which would be created by the utilisation of the land in the neighbourhood for agricultural or dairying purposes. The line between Brisbane and Gympie was paying £5 16s. 2d. per cent., but that was not due to the traffic from Gympie alone; it was due to development of the timber, agricultural, and dairying industries, as well as to mining. The traffic from Gympie as far as mining was concerned had fallen off considerably.

Mr. MULCAHY: There is more traffic from Gympie now than ever.

Mr. FORSYTH: There was more traffic through Gympie, but not from Gympie itself.

Mr. MULCAHY: From Gympie itself.

Mr. FORSYTH: Well, there was a considerable increase in the traffic from the

dairying industry on that railway. Where the land around a mining centre was no good, the Government should be very careful about constructing a railway to that centre. The hon. member for Croydon knew very well that the Croydon field was not as prosperous as it might be, and that there was no possible means of making the railway in that district pay except through mining, because the land in that locality was no good at all.

Mr. MURPHY: At the time that railway was built it looked as if Croydon was going to prosper and expand.

Mr. FORSYTH: That was so; but, in view of all the circumstances, he thought it would have been a good thing for the Government to construct that railway for the State. He very much doubted if the line from Cooktown had been taken right to the Palmer, if it would have paid. While he held that the Government should help the mining industry in every way possible, he did not think railways should be built to mining centres, unless there was a fair prospect of their paying. With regard to exemptions, he did not think that people who held leases without intending to make any use of them should be shown any consideration, but where an honest attempt had been made to develop mining properties, the lessees should receive every encouragement. Would any hon. member say that the Mount Cuthbert Company should give up their lands, after they had shown a determination to do their best to develop the properties and make them pay?

Mr. MULLAN: We have never objected to reasonable extensions of exemptions.

Mr. FORSYTH: There were other companies which had done a considerable amount of work in developing their mines, and which were endeavouring to raise more capital in order to do more work, in the hope that their further enterprise would prove successful; and they were entitled to every consideration. He held that the warden and the Under Secretary and the Minister should take all the circumstances into consideration, and endeavour to ascertain whether men who wanted exemptions or extensions of leases were really bona fide in their efforts to raise money to carry on the work of the mines. Where it was evident that there was a bona fide attempt made to continue work, then the department would not be justified in taking their leases from them; nor would it be justified in forfeiting the leases of a company which had to suspend work because the price of copper had fallen so low that it would not pay them to continue operations. The prosperity of mining would not be promoted by forfeiting leases. He knew of plenty of leases on which thousands and thousands of pounds had been spent, and then they had been cancelled, and no one had since taken them up, and they were not likely to be taken up unless they were provided with the means of communication which would enable them to be worked at a profit. If the Government wanted to help the mining industry, they should run railways to mining centres on the guarantee principle. The Cloncurry Company to which he had referred had spent £60,000 or £70,000 on their property, and were now spending £25,000 or £30,000 more in order to prove their properties, and they wanted the Govern-

ment to help them and assist them out of their trouble. There were a lot of free-holds there, which of course were exempt from labour conditions. Although there were a number of miners there not working, still, if railway communication were given to that district they would start work.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. FORSYTH: He would take another five minutes. He knew all about that country, and if a railway went down the Leichhardt—whether it went to Normanton or Burketown did not matter—but if a railway were built down the Leichhardt it would not be long before there would be 2,000 or 3,000 men working there. (Hear, hear!) They should do a great deal to assist the mining industry there, and by building a railway they would not only assist the mining but the pastoral industry as well. The Government had promised to open a port somewhere in the Gulf, and he did not want to see them build a line that would not pay. But to make a line pay they must take in the two industries—mining and pastoral. There were a large number of "shows" along that route which would be opened up by a railway. They knew that hundreds of men had been working on these "shows," getting out the rich ores, which returned from 25 to 30 and up to 40 per cent. of copper. Now that all the rich grades had been worked out they were getting on the lower grades, and they wanted a railway to convey the product to the smelters. He knew of no district that required assistance more than the Northern mining districts, and the one he referred to in particular. In spite of the fact that the output of gold was decreasing—it was steadily decreasing all the time—it was a pleasing feature to know that the baser metals were showing an increase; and, although there was a big decline in the production of gold, the baser metals showed such an increase that the mines turned out a value of £3,700,000 for the year. That was a big lot of money for an industry to earn, and they should help it on sound lines, and it would be a further benefit to Queensland. Queensland was a wonderful country, containing, as it did, every kind of mineral, large timber areas, and good pastoral country, and they should assist to develop it all they could. Things were looking better at Charters Towers, and they expected to hear good things from there later on. It was pleasing to know that coal and the baser metals increased by £50,000 last year. If the Government wanted to help the mining industry, they should do it by building a railway down the Leichhardt: that would be the best means of doing it.

Mr. LENNON (Herbert): He had a few words to say about districts that had been neglected, taking his cue from the hon. member who had just sat down. He had nothing to say against assistance being given to the district quoted by the hon. member, but he wished some assistance to be given to the Kangaroo Hills district, which was situated about 25 to 30 miles south-west of Ingham, in North Queensland. That was a district that was worked chiefly by men getting tin. They hoped to discover a large lode there, but so far nothing permanent had presented itself to them, although they had a number of small lodes working successfully. That district had received no assistance whatever

Mr. Lennon.]

from this or any other Government, and yet it had added to the revenue of the State to the extent of £300,000. It not only contained tin, but the wolfram prospects were also good. The Government had been approached over and over again and impressed with the need for introducing portable batteries into these districts. They were not costly, being only somewhere about £500 or £600 each, and if they made experiments with three or four portable batteries, it would cost only £2,000, and he honestly believed that they would do good for Queensland. They might experiment with one in the Kangaroo Hills district, so that when the stream tin worked out the men would have something more permanent to turn their attention to. He had waited on the Minister with deputations and mentioned in the House the necessity for establishing a portable battery at Kangaroo Hills, and he again urged on the Government to follow the good example of Western Australia and try the experiment there, and it would be sure to bear good fruit for Queensland.

* Mr. NEVITT (*Carpentaria*): He had a few words to say on the general administration of the Mines Department, but owing to the Standing Orders he would be unable to do so. In reply to the hon. member who advocated the building of a railway down the Leichhardt, he advocated just the reverse, because he thought the railway should go up the Leichhardt, as it would mean a considerable difference to that country and to the people it was going to benefit. With regard to the commission which was appointed to inquire into the health conditions in Queensland mines, he congratulated the Government on the personnel of that commission. The Health Officer, Dr. Elkington, was a very necessary appointment on account of the technical knowledge he possessed from a medical standpoint. The Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr. Jackson, also possessed a good deal of technical knowledge that was requisite in that direction. Then the chairman of the commission, the hon. member for Croydon, displayed a good deal of judicial knowledge in his management of that particular commission. With the material at hand and the time at their disposal, they were to be congratulated on the report which they presented to the House. He was extremely sorry that the report was not as valuable as it might have been. That was not the fault of the commission. In many instances it was the fault of the records that they had to go through in order to get their information together. Then, again, it was the fault of the people most interested in the industry who did not respond to the inquiries of the commission. (Hear, hear!) For instance, take the number of forms that were sent out by the commission. They found that eight mines inspectors received forms and returned them all, after filling them in. Out of 572 forms sent to mine managers only ninety responded, showing that the mine managers of Queensland did not realise the seriousness of this trouble. The same thing applied to others besides mine managers. Out of 217 forms sent to managers of mills and smelting works, only twenty-seven were returned. The forms sent to secretaries of unions showed that five out of every seven forms issued were returned. That was a very fair percentage, but when they came to the miners themselves, in whose interests the commission was appointed, they found that

out of 14,000 forms sent out only 1,860 were returned filled in, or about one in every eight. There were 144 forms sent to medical practitioners, and twenty-two returned; forty-two to hospital medical officers, and sixteen returned; and twenty to life and accident insurance companies and eleven returned. He sincerely hoped the Government, with the aid of the Commissioner of Public Health, would devise some means whereby hospitals would be compelled to keep a better record than they were keeping to-day. He knew that in every hospital they were supposed to keep a detailed account of every patient, but in many instances the details were not kept as they should be. If they had been carried out as they ought to have been, the details would have been at the disposal of the commission, who would have received a good deal more information than they had done. The bulk of the evidence showed that dust was the mechanical agent and the primary cause of the phthisis and pulmonary diseases from which the miners suffered. The same thing applied to the findings of the commission in Western Australia, South Africa, and in the commission in England which inquired into the conditions of the Cornish mines. They all came to the same conclusion—that the cause of the miners' illness was working in the dry atmosphere heavily charged with dust. He would show later on that the commission showed that the miners were working in saturated atmospheres where the temperature showed 100 per cent. of moisture. It was shown that, while in a saturated atmosphere of 95 degrees, it was impossible for men to work, yet they had places in Queensland where the men were working in a saturated atmosphere which showed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. It was not only impossible for men to do a reasonable day's work under these conditions, but it was injurious to their health, and that showed the necessity for a better system of ventilation than existed at the present time. Eighty-one records were taken of temperatures showing 90 per cent. of humidity, and seventeen showed 100 per cent. of humidity. That meant a saturated atmosphere. It meant that wet and dry bulb were the same, but no man could retain his health under conditions of that kind. Twelve records were

[5 p.m.] taken where the mining temperatures were 90 degrees, whilst one rock temperature in Charters Towers was shown to go as high as 109 degrees. It did not follow from that that the temperature of the mine throughout was 109 degrees, because in some of the mines on Charters Towers there was a very fair system of ventilation, with the result that the dry atmosphere passing through reduced the rock temperatures, and also the temperatures in which a number of men had to work. This showed that there was far greater supervision needed, and he hoped the Minister would be able to invest his inspectors with greater powers than they had to-day. The department should set up a standard whereby no man should be called upon to work under these conditions more than a certain length of time. If the temperature was over 85 degrees wet bulb, a miner should not be called upon to work more than five or six hours in these places. It was not in the interests of the mineowner to allow men to work under these conditions, as it was impossible for them to do a reasonable day's work. The commission also pointed out that bath and change houses were not

[*Mr. Lennon.*]

as they should be, whilst in some cases the conditions were all that could be desired; in the large majority of cases there were no change-houses at all, whilst others were defective. The inspectors should be empowered to insist on the minowners providing the necessary change-houses for miners, with bathrooms attached. Then the commission found out the defective sanitary conditions which existed in a number of the mines. He was surprised to find that not one of our coalmines was provided with sanitary arrangements underground, and it was remarkable that the health of the coalminers had been as good as it had been. During the recess the hon. member for Charters Towers and himself went to Broken Hill and visited the Broken Hill North, one of the deepest mines there. There was a pan system in force there with a spring lid attached, and when the lid was down it was airtight, and there was no foul air. The atmosphere was as good there as it was in the working part of the mine. The commission recommended that sanitary arrangements should be provided in metalliferous mines at every 100-foot level.

THE SECRETARY FOR MINES: Our regulations passed last session provide that, and they have been carried into effect.

Mr. NEVITT was very pleased to hear that. The commission also pointed out that a good deal of the trouble which miners were suffering from was caused by dust. Respirators should be provided and miners educated up to the value of them. They would not use them, because they did not know the value of them. There should be sanitary education in our State schools, so that those who entered into the mining industry would know the value of the things provided. The commission also pointed out that in some of the mines sprays were provided to keep down the dust, but that they were not made as much use of as they should be. In the case of the Mount Morgan Mine, the contract system prevailed to a considerable extent—in fact, he believed all the miners underground were working by contract. The miners thought that if they used the sprays it would take up too much of their time and that they would not be able to shift the amount of stuff they wished. They should be educated to realise that if they kept down the dust they would have better health and be able to continue at their employment for a longer period than they would under existing conditions. He was struck by a paragraph in the report of the medical officer, in which it was stated that one of the predisposing causes of sickness amongst miners was their tendency to take too much alcohol. That was another question of education. The medical officer was a man of considerable experience, and could speak with a great deal of authority on these questions.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. NEVITT: He would take his further time. They also pointed out the careless habits that existed amongst miners. With regard to spitting, the medical officer had placards in a number of public places and railway stations—"Gentlemen will not spit; others must not spit." If that was carried out by every member of the community, it would materially help to put down the trouble caused by phthisis. (Hear, hear!)

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What will they do in the dust?

Mr. NEVITT: If facilities were provided to keep down the dust, the same desire to expectorate would not arise. Then, on page 84, the commissioners said—

"We are aware that persons affected with pulmonary tuberculosis are working in Queensland mines, and, whilst we consider that in any given case of tubercular or other infective lung disease occurring in a miner the exciting cause has probably been some human source of infection encountered in his environment above ground, we regard the risk of below-ground infection as a real and definite one under certain conditions."

The trouble would be minimised if the habit of spitting was not indulged in. It applied above ground as well as under ground; but far more to underground, because the facilities for the growth of bacteria were more numerous than above ground. Above ground we had one of the best purifiers in the sun. Any bacteria which was exposed to the rays of the sun for a time were destroyed, but the moist temperature underground was a breeding place for them. He had already mentioned the hospital returns, which were not as valuable as they would be if a little more care was exercised by those in charge of hospitals in keeping their returns in a proper manner.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: There were regulations providing for proper returns issued four or five years ago.

Mr. NEVITT: That had not been done, and he hoped the medical officer would provide sheets for those in charge of hospitals to keep. It would be for the welfare of the community. With regard to medical examination, the result was very disappointing. In the first place, it was not compulsory, and therefore very few offered themselves for examination, as they had an impression that if they were suffering from lung troubles they would be ordered away from the mines, and no provision would be made to enable them to keep themselves and their families. But that was no fault of the commission; they had done excellent work with the material at hand. Of the few examined amongst machine miners 7.4 were suffering from fibrosis, and tuberculosis existed amongst machine miners to the extent of 3.5 per cent., showing that, although there was a very limited number of men examined, the disease existed, and, as the medical officer pointed out, it was the source of serious danger.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's further time had expired.

Mr. NEVITT (continuing): This serious danger should be grappled with at the earliest opportunity. Miners worked in a moist and humid atmosphere, where the conditions were considered good, as far as mining went, with a percentage of only 75 per cent. with a dry bulb, and 60 to 65 per cent. with a wet bulb, and the tendency in connection with men working underground under these conditions was to undermine their constitution to such an extent that when the bacilli of phthisis was about it was a fertile ground in which it might propagate itself. The average individual above ground might take the bacteria of tuberculosis a thousand times a week, but the constitution was so robust that the disease was thrown off. He hoped the Minister and the department would act upon this report where possible, as there were many valuable suggestions which could be carried into execution at once. The medical officer also stated that phthisis was

on the increase in Queensland, particularly amongst miners. They found that in the older countries of the world, where they were taking more serious notice of this trouble, that the reverse was the case. In Great Britain tuberculosis of all kinds had decreased during the last ten years by 19 per cent., in Ireland and Scotland by 24 per cent., in Germany by 18 per cent., in London by 30 per cent., Berlin by 34 per cent., and in Paris by 3 per cent. During the last fifty years it had decreased by over 50 per cent. with people under the age of twenty-five years. That showed the further necessity of the Government giving the medical officers of Queensland every assistance, both financial and otherwise, so that they could bring Queensland up to the perfection of the older countries of the world in that respect.

Mr. LAND: We are importing them to Queensland.

Mr. NEVITT: That was another aspect of the question which he did not feel inclined to enter upon at that time. The doctor also stated that in the community in general and in mining centres in particular, material action should be taken at once or the rise would continue, and that there was considerable risk that it would become a serious feature in the large mining communities. The doctor further recommended that bath-houses and change-houses should be provided in all mines, and also sanitary arrangements. It did not matter whether they were coalmines or metalliferous mines. At present no sanitary arrangements were provided in the coalmines in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is all arranged for in the regulations.

Mr. NEVITT: There was another very good suggestion made by the commission--

"Excremental pollution of any part of mine, and wanton fouling of privy, should be made a punishable offence."

The bill indicated that the hon. member's third allotment of time had expired.

Mr. THEODORE (Woothakata): The impression he had received by reading the report of the Miners' Phthisis Commission was that the commission had not given due importance to the question which they were investigating. Their investigations were, unfortunately, more or less superficial as the time at their disposal was very limited.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They had the whole of the recess, remember; they could not sit at any other time.

Mr. THEODORE: The data at their disposal was very limited. It would have been of very great assistance to them if they had received more returns from the hospitals, friendly societies, and miners' associations. It was essential that, before they could form any idea of the prevalence of miners' complaints in Queensland, they should have had the data which could have been supplied, if sufficient notice had been given, by friendly societies, miners' associations, and hospitals. It was unfortunate that that data and information was not made available to the commission, because their own experiments and observations had to be carried out within a very limited time, and under certain disabilities, and it would be unreasonable to expect the commission to carry out comprehensive investigations into the question of mine atmospheres and gases, and make a thorough report and recommendation upon the subject. Whether the disease

—which was now referred to as miners' phthisis—whether it was communicable from one person to another was almost beside the question. That it did exist to an alarming extent among miners was admitted by all. The report of the commission led one to think that they were of the opinion that miners' complaint existed only in the imagination of the miners, and that the diseases which miners suffered from were the usual diseases that affected all classes of all communities. He held the opposite opinion. He did not know whether it was a separate disease unconnected with other diseases which affected the general community, but he certainly did know, and it was the opinion of most miners, that there was a disease affecting miners more than it affected the general members of the community, and more than it affected men following occupations other than metalliferous mining. He was inclined to think that the commission's findings and conclusions regarding the percentage of miners affected by the disease tended to under-estimate its prevalence. There was a far greater number of miners affected by some form or other of phthisis or other disease, which was generally referred to as miners' complaint, and the conclusions arrived at by Dr. Cumpston, of Western Australian Royal Commission, also went on those lines. Dr. Cumpston discovered that among the machine men at Kalgoorlie, in Western Australia, there was a percentage of thirty-three suffering from that disease. That was an alarmingly high percentage, and it could be borne out by facts. He did not say that the same percentage existed in Queensland. In the large mining centres of Western Australia most of the men were using machines or working behind them, and they were working in a class of country which rendered miners particularly susceptible to that disease. In Queensland a large number of the miners were working in soft rock country, the dust from which was not so deleterious to the health of the miners, and therefore the percentage of miners suffering from the disease in Queensland was probably less, but not so small as the percentage given in the report of the commission. The commission had made certain recommendations, and he wished to know whether the Government intended to carry out those recommendations.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I have already stated that the Government intend to do so.

Mr. THEODORE thought the Government should make some more definite announcement.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What more definite announcement can I make?

Mr. THEODORE wanted to know whether the Government were going to carry out the recommendations for additional regulations.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Most of them are provided for in the Act.

Mr. THEODORE: If that was all the Government intended to do, then the work of the commission went for nought.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: We are having the necessary alterations made and the regulations drawn up.

Mr. THEODORE: They required not only to draw up regulations, but to strictly enforce the regulations when they were drawn up. Under the present regulations, when an attempt was made by the mines inspectors to rigorously apply or compel the mine manager to apply them, they were

[*Mr. Nevitt.*]

generally combated with the statement that to apply certain regulations involved an enormous amount of expense.

Mr. THEODORE: Will the hon. member state one specific case in which the Mines Department has not carried out the regulations? If the hon. member states any case he knows of, I will see that the regulations are carried out. I do not like the hon. member to indulge in generalities.

Mr. THEODORE: Unfortunately, in a question of that sort, one was more or less compelled to indulge in generalities.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What is the good of that?

Mr. THEODORE did not wish to make any charge against the inspectors or against the department, nor against the mine managers, because often they had very good excuses why certain drastic regulations should not be applied.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I accept no excuse. If any of these regulations are not carried out, and I can only get particulars, I will take action.

Mr. THEODORE: By way of interjection, the Minister told the hon. member for Carpentaria, in connection with sprays, that he had arranged for that matter.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It is arranged for.

Mr. THEODORE: In some mines it was almost impossible to carry out that regulation. He alluded to the question of spraying in cases where dry holes were being bored, particularly by rock drills. One of the most important recommendations of the commission was upon that question. In some mines, as at present worked, it was almost impossible to install a system for the use of the spray. If the Minister took the necessary steps to prevent men working at dry holes without the use of a spray, well and good. The most important thing they could do was to frame regulations whereby the miners would be compelled to use a spray, and not only a spray, but, in places such as driving with rock drills or in rising, compel them to use a jet, which was much more important than a spray. A spray could only be used in allaying dust created by drilling, and was more or less ineffective. In boring holes that had an inclination upwards, the miners should be compelled to use a jet, which would eject a stream of water to the top of the hole where the drill was working, and thus prevent dust arising. That was a most important precautionary measure that could be adopted in connection with boring. The commission laid great stress upon the danger of dust which was stirred up in working operations, and they suggested certain methods for allaying the dust. In Broken Hill, after very extended inquiries upon the subject, the authorities had come to the conclusion that the best method of allaying the dust was by the use of jets. That would facilitate boring operations, but it also necessitated the laying on of pipes for the purpose of getting a pressure, because they could not have a jet sufficiently strong to carry out that idea unless they also provided for a considerable hydraulic pressure. A number of mines, particularly those working on a small scale, would find it very expensive to install such a system, but the expense would be justified.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They will have to do so under the regulations.

Mr. THEODORE hoped the Minister would keep up to his promises. He recognised

that the regulations might be applied or they might not be applied. He hoped the Minister would see that the miners were compelled to use the jets. The commission referred to the evident reluctance upon the part of the miners to use precautionary measures. Why not compel the miners to use them? He had worked as a miner, and he knew that, for a contract miner, it often militated against the making of good wages when they were compelled to use such things as jets, sprays, and respirators, and there was no particular inducement to use them unless the miners were made to realise the danger to health. The Minister would be justified in taking very drastic action to compel the adoption of measures to protect the health of miners. While on the question of respirators, he would suggest that the Minister might do more than the commission recommended. There was not a respirator on the market that was worth the money it cost or the trouble it occasioned, and [5.30 p.m.] miners would not be bothered with them, because they prevented free breathing and did not accomplish the object which they were invented to accomplish. The department might with advantage spend a sum of money in making experiments with respirators, with the view of discovering one which would answer the purpose required. On the question as to what we were going to do with miners who were affected with the disease, the Minister had told the Committee nothing.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Oh, yes: I said we are at the present time arranging for a site in the Central district for the establishment of a new sanatorium, as suggested by the commission.

Mr. THEODORE: That was a very good thing to do, but the Government should go further and establish a number of sanatoria in different parts of Queensland, and not have miners coming from the North to the South to get into the Dalby Sanatorium, and then find that there was not sufficient accommodation for them.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. THEODORE: He would continue. If a sanatorium was established in North Queensland it would absorb a number of men who were suffering from the disease, and thus relieve the pressure on the Dalby Sanatorium. In order to make adequate provision in that respect, we needed a number of sanatoria, because there were a large number of men who were affected with the disease. He was surprised that the commission had discovered so few.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I am sorry the hon. member did not notify those cases to the commission.

Mr. THEODORE: No; he thought the commission was appointed to inquire into the matter, and find out to what extent the disease existed among miners. It was to be deprecated that the miners did not come forward more freely and give evidence on the subject, but no doubt many were prevented from doing so by fear of victimisation. The commission held their inquiries in some cases in the mines office, and miners were reluctant to go there and give evidence.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I think the personality of the chairman of the commission should have been a sufficient assurance that they were quite safe.

Mr. Theodore.]

Mr. THEODORE: It was very difficult to dispel the fear that they might suffer if they gave evidence which was unfavourable to the mine in which they were employed, and there was also the personal fear of being told that they were suffering from a malignant disease. But apart from the establishment of sanatoria, the Government should do something for men who were suffering from the disease in its early stage, and who might in consequence be excluded from underground mining, and so lose their means of livelihood. He hoped that the Minister intended to take some steps to discover the men who were suffering from diseases which were likely to be communicated to other men. The miners who gave evidence before the commission were practically unanimous in the opinion that men suffering from a communicable disease should be excluded from underground work. Those men would not be suitable subjects for treatment in the sanatorium, but still they would be excluded from employment in underground mining, and that would be a hardship.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: As a matter of fact, those are the men who are in the first case suitable for treatment in the sanatorium, as they are the very cases which may be cured.

Mr. THEODORE: He was glad to hear the Minister say that, but his personal knowledge of the cases which were treated at Dalby led him to the conclusion that that institution was for men who were in an advanced stage of the disease.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No; we treat incurables at the Diamantina institution, but at Dalby we treat cases that may be cured.

Mr. THEODORE: He was pleased to hear that, but thought it was a pity the fact was not more generally known. If it were generally known, the Dalby Sanatorium would not provide sufficient accommodation for the cases which might be offered for treatment. But miners who had large families objected to go to a sanatorium, and be under treatment, perhaps, for six months, as that prevented them from supporting their wives and families.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In all those cases the wife gets an allowance for her children, and where necessary she gets full ratings for herself and her children.

Mr. THEODORE: That was a very good scheme, and the only objection he had in regard to it was that it was not more generally applied, because he knew that every member representing a mining district could nominate a number of men who were suffering from the disease in its earlier or later stages, and who were not receiving any treatment. Anyhow, it was only a half measure after all, because it was pretty well understood that the sanatorium at Dalby could not turn them out absolutely cured.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Oh, yes.

Mr. THEODORE: Then it must be after a long course of treatment.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Sometimes long and sometimes short.

Mr. THEODORE: At any rate, a person who has apparently recovered was more susceptible to the disease than a vigorous, able-bodied man, and, therefore, it was undesirable that he should follow an underground

occupation. The Government should assist such men by putting them on the land or finding them some other occupation which would be free from the dust and in a pure atmosphere. Personally, he thought the Minister was too sanguine about the treatment of these cases, and would not be surprised to learn that there were 1,000 or more miners in Queensland suffering from the disease, or some form of tubercular disease.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I hope not.

Mr. THEODORE: Judging from the number that one met with in a casual way, there must be a large number suffering from the disease. There was another way in which the Government might assist the miners, and that was by establishing some system of insurance, somewhat on the lines of the miners' relief fund in New South Wales, under which the employers made a certain contribution to the fund, which was subsidised by the State.

Mr. MAUGHAN (*Ipswich*): In looking over the vote for this department, one of the most important departments in the State, he found that the amount to be appropriated for the expenditure for the year was £47,000. Out of a total revenue expenditure of £5,314,737 for all the State departments, there was only £47,126 set apart for the Mines Department. Ten years ago the expenditure of the department was £38,000—he was giving the round figures; the following year it was £25,000, the next year £24,000, the next year £25,000, and so on, until now it had only reached £47,000. While he had no desire to harass or criticise the Minister unduly, yet he felt bound to say that the Department of Mines demanded more attention at the hands of the Government than it had received in the past. As a mining member representing the biggest coalfield in Queensland, he wanted to help the Minister to get more consideration in the future from the Government in connection with the expenditure of his department. The expenditure of other departments had increased considerably, while that of the Mines Department had been practically standing still for some years. He noticed that the heading to the vote they were now considering was referred to as "Goldfields." The legislation which dealt with mining was passed for the regulation of mining on coalfields as well as goldfields, and he hoped that in future the Minister would see that the officials of the department included in that heading the word "Coalfields."

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It really should be "Goldfields, Coalfields, and Mineral Fields." I will see that that is done.

Mr. MAUGHAN: His reason for urging this matter was that the coalmining industry was gradually assuming much larger proportions than it did a few years ago. In 1900 the quantity of coal produced in Queensland amounted to 497,123 tons. Five years later it increased to 529,326 tons, and last year we had a record output, the yield being 871,176 tons. Out of this tonnage, the Ipswich and Darling Downs collieries produced 729,012 tons, Wide Bay and Maryborough 93,055 tons, Rockhampton 14,392 tons, and Clermont 34,707 tons; total, 871,176 tons. He took this opportunity of congratulating the Minister and officers of the department upon their administration, so far as his district was concerned. He could assure the Minister that if he had any particular complaint that he would bring it forward in the Com-

[*Mr. Theodore.*]

mittee. He admitted, however, that he had no serious complaint in regard to the administration of the department. The inspection in connection with coalmines had materially improved during the last few years. It was a duty he owed to the men who worked in that industry to say so. If it were not so he would mighty soon let the Minister know his opinion about it. That applied not only to the question of ventilation—and he admitted there was room for improvement in that matter, and he hoped as a result of the regulations in connection with the Act passed last year that they would see a great deal of improvement in regard to this important matter—but as regards the condition of winding-gear and mining machinery generally, there had been a decided improvement. The colliery proprietors realised more than they used to do the importance of making every provision for the safety of human life, and he would like to pay a tribute to the Hon. the Minister in connection with circumstances that took place the other day. At a certain colliery the manager was told that he carried too many men in the cage. The union promptly notified him (Mr. Maughan), and steps were at once taken to interview the Minister. To the credit of the Minister, he went at once to Ipswich and inspected the thing himself, with the result that he gave his decision against the management. It should not require the Minister to do such a thing, seeing that inspecting officers were appointed and paid by the House to do that sort of thing. They were given power to put into execution the regulations. It only went to show that if they had not had a man at the head of the department who was sympathetic with the administration of the Act, loss of life might have happened, and they had lost enough lives in the coalmines of Queensland in the last twenty years without losing any more. (Hear, hear!) He referred to the importance of appointing as assistant inspectors practical coalminers. He was not saying anything about the men who had graduated through the various schools of mines and universities, but practical men who had graduated in the school and university of experience, provided all other things were equal, were quite capable of doing the duties of inspectors, and it was men of that calibre who should be appointed as assistant inspectors. That was a matter that was felt very keenly in his district. There was a feeling that in future appointments the department should take into serious consideration the matter of appointing thoroughly practical miners to act as assistant inspectors, and he hoped that as far as possible that would be done. He wished to place on record the appreciation of the coalminers of his district of the work done by Mr. Thomas, who had been an assistant inspector of coalmines in that district. He could tell the Minister that he was sorry that Mr. Thomas had left the Ipswich district. Mr. Thomas had been translated to the North, and, of course, he had improved his position and it meant promotion for him.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is so.

Mr. MAUGHAN: At any rate, the hundreds of men engaged in the industry in his district had every confidence in Mr. Thomas, and regretted very much that he had gone. Although he believed that man they had got in his place was a good man—

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He is a good man. He is specially qualified in coalmining.

Mr. MAUGHAN: He understood that he came from New South Wales. He was not parochial in these matters, but at the same time he could not help thinking that they had men in Queensland who had experience in coalmines—who had passed through the underground grades up to mine manager, who were quite as capable as Mr. Laurie.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He has special qualifications in connection with firedamp, which unfortunately has made its appearance in West Moreton Coalmines.

Mr. MAUGHAN: He was not depreciating the value of Mr. Laurie's qualifications; far from that, as he believed he was eminently fitted to occupy the position he held. But, all things being equal, they should see that some encouragement was given to the men who had borne the brunt of the day in Queensland, and men who had the confidence of their fellow-miners, to secure a position of that sort.

Mr. MURPHY: The Act provides that the inspector of mines shall hold a mine manager's certificate.

Mr. MAUGHAN: That was so; but, all things being equal, if the Queenslander had the qualifications he should be given a chance.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAUGHAN: There was ample room for improvement in regard to the development of the coal industry. On page 119 of the report of the Chief Inspector of Mines, who had his position changed to that of State Mining Engineer, they found this paragraph—

"In the Southern division some prospecting was done in the Warwick district, and a new mine, called the Sunrise Colliery, has been opened in the Toowoomba district, but operations there are still only in the prospecting stage. In the Ipswich district some prospecting work has been done on several properties, and a few new mines have been opened. In the Wide Bay district some work was also done at Howard and Torbanlea, in connection with which some investigations were made by the Geological Survey. In the Central division prospecting work has been continued by the Charley Coal Syndicate at Tryphena, and at the Dawson River by the Government. In the Chillogoe district a little prospecting work was also done."

They were not providing the department with sufficient money under that particular head. More money should be placed in the hands of the Minister and the department for development work in connection with the coal industry, just as was done in connection with other industries. Why should the coal industry be kept back as practically the Cinderella of all the industries of Queensland? He objected to that. Other hon. members who were interested in the progress of the coalmining industry would not object to it receiving more assistance. When they had regard to the fact that they were importing a tremendous lot of coal into Queensland—they would see on page 119 of the Chief Inspector's report that they had imported 433,563 tons of coal in the last ten years—they should do far more to develop the industry in Queensland. He noticed the Minister for Railways was interested.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would like to carry more of it on the railways.

Mr. Maughan.]

Mr. MAUGHAN: From the point of view of revenue, the development of the coal industry was a tremendous factor. In the Ipswich and Bundaburra districts alone £60,000 was collected by the Minister for Railways for freight on coal. That was a big item. He had not the figures for the other coal districts, but £135,524 was collected in railway freights on coal in the State.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MAUGHAN (continuing): It was a big revenue-producing factor. Another thing in that connection was the coke industry, and his remarks on the development of the coal industry would apply with equal force to the coke industry. He had not the figures showing the value of coke produced in Queensland, as there were no statistics given showing the actual value of coke; but on page 119 of the report they would see that in the last ten years they had imported 247,042 tons into Queensland. The hon. member for Fitzroy knew that a large portion of that was imported into Rockhampton for use at Mount Morgan, the balance going to Cairns. He supposed that fully 80 per cent. of the coke imported went to Mount Morgan. The Minister would be doing a good thing for Queensland if he assisted or encouraged the existing coke manufacturers, or perhaps established State coke works—it did not matter how it was done, so long as they could stop the importation of coke, and develop our own coke industry. The Treasurer was interested in the harbour dues, and there was another aspect of the question. If the great shipping companies at the other end of the world and in Australia generally knew that they could get an ample supply of good coal in Queensland, they would send their big liners to Brisbane to get it. The report of the Chief Inspector showed that the tonnage of shipping leaving the port of Brisbane increased from 1,620,337 tons in 1905 to 2,327,465 tons in 1910. That showed the great shipping development that was going on, and that meant that more coal was being consumed. Large numbers of those ships did not coal in Brisbane at all, but went to Newcastle, for the simple reason that sufficient development works were not carried on in Queensland in connection with that industry, and there were not adequate facilities for discharging coal into the ships. This was a matter that required the serious attention of the Mines Department, and he hoped it would receive that attention before next year. The Minister had been interested in establishing a rescue station in anticipation of what they hoped would never eventuate—that was, some disaster as a result of firedamp. In spite of the fact that all these up-to-date appliances were long established in connection with the working of the coalmines in the old country, they found that accidents were increasing there at a tremendous rate. At the same time, he was glad the Minister had established that station, and he hoped it would prove a success in time of need. At the same time, he could establish forty or fifty stations, but unless the regulations were properly

[7 p.m.] administered in accordance with the Act passed last year, all the rescue stations he would like to create would be of no avail. In connection with the heading "Geological Survey," three assistant geologists were provided for. He asked

[*Mr. Maughan.*]

the Minister whether he really thought, having regard to the importance of the industry and its expansion during the past few years, it was a sufficient staff of geologists to cope with the work. He could not give any concrete case to show that the Geological Survey office was undermanned, but at the same time, if we were going to have a great mining industry in Queensland, we should require more geologists. In New South Wales the staff was bigger than it was in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are four in Queensland.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Yes; there was a senior officer, who was, he supposed, very largely engaged in his office.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No, he was out.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Had we got any cadets in connection with the Geological Department? Were we training our young men?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In the Charters Towers School of Mines we are doing that.

Mr. MAUGHAN: He had not much time left, and should be glad if the hon. gentleman would take a note of his requests, and reply to them later. We were fortunate in having such a splendid institution at Charters Towers; at the same time, there were many young men in Queensland who, if they were given an opportunity of becoming geologists, would avail themselves of the position; but there did not seem to be any inducements held out to them to attach themselves to the Geological Department. In the Railway Department and other departments that was provided for by encouraging young Queenslanders to come forward. It appeared, however, that no provision was made for cadets in the Geological Survey Office. In connection with the regulations which had been gazetted by the Mines Department, he would like the Minister to instruct the permanent head of the department to see that the regulations were posted up in all the collieries and mines throughout Queensland. There were thousands of railway employees in Queensland who were given copies of the regulations of the service, and if he had his way he would give every miner a copy of the regulations of the Mines Department. In connection with the increases to clerks in the Geological Survey Office, he noticed that the clerk and Librarian was not receiving an increase, and the same applied to another clerk, while there were large increases to the Under Secretary and the chief accountant.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The Under Secretary's was passed last year, although it was omitted owing to a printer's error.

Mr. MAUGHAN had no objection to the increases to these officers, but at the same time he should like the underpaid junior officers he had referred to to get a lift. He urged that the wives and children of miners afflicted with phthisis should be looked after more than hitherto in regard to allowances.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MAUGHAN: In conclusion, he should like to express his thanks to the officers of the department for the courteous way in which his various requests had been attended to during the past year.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (*Kennedy*): The hon. member for Burke had drawn the attention of the Hon. the Minister to the exemptions being granted in his electorate. He himself had known instances where exemptions had been given to mining companies time after time, one great reason for which was this: Unfortunately, men got control of the mine and got exemption after exemption to wear out the little shareholders, and so get the whole control of the mine. The department should not lend itself to any such tricks as those. The Mines Department did not consciously act in this way, but those who were on the ground knew that this was one of the great incentives to apply for exemption after exemption. Not only would it be to the interests of the industry to have the leases worked, but it was also for the benefit of the miners, who would be protected from those who did not seem to take any interest in the industry except so far as it touched their pockets. He would like the department to insist on pegs being shown and kept on the freehold, because men went prospecting on the mining fields thinking it was Crown land, and after they had done a considerable amount of work a freeholder came and told them that they were trespassing.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Under the Mining on Private Lands Act they can get a permit to go on the freehold.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Yes, but those were the old freeholds given under the 1872 Act and various other Mineral Lands Alienation Acts.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Gold was never exempted.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Minerals other than gold. His attention had been drawn to this matter by letter, and also when in his electorate. He would like to emphasise the reason why, in his opinion, many of the big mining propositions were not paying to-day. Take the Chillagoe Company, which did not pay any dividends on its mine—it was the railway which was keeping the company together. The reason the mines were not paying was because when they got the concession from this House they hawked it over the financial markets of the world, and put on the big price of the concession which they got from the House for nothing. That company was now charged with that capital account, which practically did not do anything towards the development of the mine.

Mr. CORSER: They did not get anything.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: They got a lot. If they had not over-capitalised the mine in the first instance by hundreds of thousands of pounds they would be earning dividends on the amount of money that had been put into the mine in bona fide work.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Well, they are "rooking" the big speculator, then.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It was not good for the mining industry to "rook" anyone, whether it was the big man or not. It was no more justifiable to "rook" the big man any more than it was to "rook" the little man. Another reason which retarded the prosperity of the industry was the system of floating the mine with, say, 100,000 shares, 40,000 of which were paid up. That had led to a lot of abuse. These men who floated the mine cornered the market. You could not get your mine floated except through these men. The result was that these men who were interested

in the flotation of the mine got control of the 40,000 paid-up shares, and by holding sufficient contributing shares, which was very small in comparison, say just over 10,000, they worked the mine for their own interest. If some amendment was made compelling all mines to be floated with contributing shares there would not be the great evils in the mining industry that there were to-day. He knew of mines where interested people had got control of the mine by simply holding on to the paid-up shares, and sufficient contributing shares to control the mine. They had gone and got exemptions, and worn out the little investor till he had thrown his shares in, and they then went and reconstructed the company under another name and started mining and probably made it pay, whereas before they could not do so. If the Government were to bring in an amendment of the Act so that all shares in a mining company should be contributing, then it would not lend itself to the evils he had mentioned. He did not look upon the report of the Mining Commission with too much confidence, because he could not shut his eyes to the fact that that commission was the outcome of a political dodge on the part of the late Premier to escape some amendment that was put in the Mines Regulation Act in the Upper House.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is the first time I have heard that.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: When the Labour party insisted on something being done for those men who would be thrown out of employment through suffering from miners' complaint, the Premier got up and said he would appoint a commission to inquire into the whole thing.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I made the recommendation on the suggestion of the gentleman who occupied the position of chairman.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN was sorry so little interest had been taken in the commission by the men working in mines, and the managers, and so forth. In many instances the men did not go to the commission to give evidence because they were afraid to give evidence regarding the mine they were working in.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is a great pity.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: It was a pity, but it was a fact nevertheless, and those statements could be borne out by other members of the Committee. There had been certain improvements in the machine drills used, which were very injurious to the health of the miners so far as the dust was concerned. That was the "one-man" drills which were used for boring dry holes. Practical miners had told him that one man with that little machine could do more work than was done by the old Ingersoll machine, which took two men to manage. One man told him only a month ago that they were practically eating dust which was caused by the one-man machines now in use. He hoped the Minister would bear that fact in mind. Of course the Minister could not prevent anything like that being done. He did not ask him to do so, but he asked him to provide regulations to meet the case of new machines introduced from time to time, and which created the dust nuisance which was so injurious to the health of the miners. The hon. member for Moreton spoke about rail-

Mr. O'Sullivan.]

way communication, and stated in his opinion the giving of railway communication would be the best means of assisting the mining industry. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) heartily agreed with that, and he would like to impress upon the Minister that in the Burdekin Valley there was a very good mining district, and not only would railway communication with that valley develop the mining industry, but it would develop agricultural and kindred industries. If those mines were worked, the field would support a population of 1,000 people, and immediately the mines showed signs of petering out, the people could be settled on the land. There were large silver lodes, also gold and copper in that district, but they could not be worked owing to the very long distance from railway communication.

The bell indicated the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. WALKER (*Wide Bay*): The Mines Department and the officers attached to the department were to be congratulated upon the way in which they had carried out their work during the last twelve months. Everyone seemed to be satisfied with the way the provisions of the various Acts had been carried out. It was to be regretted that mining all over Queensland had gone down, and he had been struck with some of the remarks passed with regard to Gympie. Last year was not as good as the preceding year; but, taking everything into consideration, Gympie had done remarkably well, and Gympie was far from a done field, more particularly when they took into consideration the cheap methods they had of treating low-grade ores. The Scottish Gympie Gold Mine had been mentioned, and to a certain extent rightly so, but it was only fair to place a few more facts before the Committee, and members would clearly understand that there was no occasion to report them for not doing their duty. They had tried to do their duty in every shape and form, and they had to contend with trials in connection with a new development which existed in the Scottish Gympie and in no other mine in Gympie. The reefs in Gympie ran north and south, with the exception of the Inglewood reef, which runs east and west, and when the Scottish Gympie struck the Inglewood reef there seemed to be a mix up of gold and other ores which could only be classed as crushing stone, and it had to be treated very cheaply or it would have been worked at a loss. Last year the Scottish Gympie made a profit of £14,000, and they made that profit on ore which returned only 5 dwt. 19 gr. That showed the work there was being carried out very well indeed. With regard to the openings mentioned by the hon. member for Gympie, the cavities there were certainly large, and they had been there for the last ten years, and the company had spent a considerable amount of money in trying to get over the trouble. Last year they spent £3,855 in filling up those cavities, so that they had done a good deal. They had not only put the whole of their mullock into those cavities, but they had taken the mullock from another mine to try and get over the difficulty. Another suggestion made was to run down tailings from their batteries. That was taken into consideration, but it was considered that the dust created by tailings in dry parts of the mine would be a danger to miners' health, and in times of flood the risk of sands running would be

very great. The Scottish Gympie had done everything possible to get over the difficulty, but still the matter was worthy of consideration, and it really meant a question of timbering. In Gympie they had a fine class of timber, which could be built up so as to have permanent stagings for the men instead of having to run up ladders to work out after firing. The department had helped Gympie very well indeed. Last year the department gave £1,500 to the Oriental Consols for deep sinking, and also £1,500 for the amalgamated deep mines. The department had also spent enormous sums of money, running into thousands of pounds, with regard to the geological survey. Mr. Dunstan and a big staff had been employed there for the past three years.

Mr. COLLINS: And it will be a monument to the geological staff of Queensland.

Mr. WALKER: Not only that, but it would be of great service to those connected with mining. Mr. Dunstan had done his work very carefully, and it could not have been done quicker. Apart from that, Gympie had had at times various grants which had been refunded. The 3 North Columbia got £700, which had been returned with interest only recently. Other mines had done the same, and he thought the Mines Department would do well to increase the vote. He would like to see the department go further, and treat the low-grade ores in Gympie, more particularly the Inglewood reef, which outcrops near the old locality called Inglewood. If that were done it would provide work for hundreds of men. A most peculiar thing was that when the other reefs came in contact with the Inglewood reef the quality of the ore went up considerably. They had several other small mining centres in the Gympie district. There was a small field at Glastonbury which was well worth prospecting. Then there was a small field at Kilkivan, the ore from which averaged a little over 2 oz. to the ton a month ago. Then there was another find in the Glenbar district, some ore from which was only crushed a few weeks ago and gave a return of 4 to 5 oz. Then there was the Yabba field, and a small field on Deep Creek, where a crushing had been put through [7.30 p.m.] lately. Those fields were worth the consideration of the Mines Department. There was one matter to which he should like to direct the special attention of the department, and that was the homestead question, which had been giving so much trouble in a district like Gympie on account of the increased value of the homesteads. Apart from mining, that district was wonderfully rich in fertile lands. Fine scrub lands, which were despised in the early days when the people did not know the value of the grasses, were now found to be of great value, particularly for dairying purposes. These lands were now known to be valuable, and people were rushing them and taking them up as homesteads, and they were not required to perform any residential conditions. That should be altered, and a man who obtained a homestead should be compelled to live on it, and not keep it for a few years and then sell it at a profit. At present homesteads were dummied in the Gympie district, and dummied shamefully. A man living at Gympie simply put in an application for a homestead, and when he had got it he put a few improvements on it, and in a few years he could sell the land. The price

[*Mr. O'Sullivan.*]

paid for the land was £1 10s. an acre, and the payment extended over a period of twenty years. He would suggest that when land on the Gympie Goldfield or on Glastonbury or any other mining field was thrown open as homesteads, the fact should be advertised, and if there was more than one applicant for a block, that block should be balloted for in the same way as other land was now ballotted for under the Land Act. Another thing he would suggest to the Minister was that copies of the Mines Regulations should be distributed among miners so that they might understand the conditions under which they worked. It would also be a good thing to send a dozen copies of the Mines Regulation Act to each mine, so that all miners should have an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the conditions under which they worked, without having to pay a lawyer 10s. 6d. for the information. He hoped that the Minister would give some attention to the suggestions that he had offered for his consideration.

* Mr. CRAWFORD (*Fitzroy*): With some of the remarks made by the hon. member who had just sat down, particularly his remarks referring to dummying, he felt himself in perfect accord. At the same time, he recognised that in view of the fact that dummying had been carried on for so many years, they would meet with enormous difficulties in trying to set it right. A new Bill would be required if they were to deal with it in any satisfactory manner.

Mr. WALKER: Why not start at once?

Mr. CRAWFORD: They might start as soon as possible, and the sooner the better, but they would certainly require a new Bill to deal with the iniquities which had arisen. The first consideration in regard to mining was whether the laws were carried out in such a way as to insure the safety of those who were engaged in mining. In the reports which had been submitted to the House they were assured that the inspectors were doing their duty as far as they could, and that the Minister was supervising, as far as lay in his power, the officers under him, and insisting upon proper attention being paid to the duties those officers were expected to discharge. Some comment was made by the senior member for Gympie in regard to pessimistic reports about local mines. He (Mr. Crawford) knew nothing about the local mines in Gympie, but he had heard a large number of rumours about want of safety in various mines. The very instructive experience he had derived from the report on the Fitzroy mines had compelled him to be very cautious in accepting such statements. It would be remembered by those who took an interest in such matters that the Minister granted an inquiry in response to a request made by him—a request based upon information conveyed to him by miners he knew well, upon whose word he placed considerable reliance, and when the time came for giving evidence those miners found themselves safer far away from the particular place where the inquiry was being conducted. Therefore, while he had very frequently to listen to tales about want of safety in this mine and that mine, he thought that they must place a great deal of reliance on the inspector. They must be sure that the inspectors were doing their duty, and should make the punishment for their not doing their duty very

severe. He did not see why they should not be indicted for manslaughter in cases of negligence leading to the loss of life. Since the passing of the last Mining Act, and since several accidents had occurred in the State, he thought the inspectors had devoted more attention to their duties, and consequently that measures for the safety of miners were better supervised. He had an idea some time ago that the Minister was not giving that encouragement to local talent that we had a right to expect from him in respect to those young men who had qualified by examination and experience in this State for the position of inspector or other office in the Mines Department. He had not heard all the hon. gentleman had said on this subject, and had not, so far, had time to read the report of his speech, but he thought that the claims of some individuals that he had in his mind to consideration had in some degree been overlooked. He held that where possible young men who had been trained in the State, and who had qualified by study and experience, should have the preference when appointments were being made to the position of inspector or other officer requiring technical knowledge. On looking through the Estimates, he found that the Chief Inspector of Mines received £500, and the State Mining Engineer and Chief Inspector of Mines received £550 per annum. He took it that those were two distinct officers.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No; one officer at £550.

Mr. CRAWFORD: That was the State Mining Engineer and Chief Inspector of Mines?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is so.

Mr. CRAWFORD: Then the longer title had the larger salary. With regard to the geological survey, he thought too small a sum was provided for carrying out that important work. We should spend three or four times the amount provided if that work was to be carried out properly, and produce results which would enable persons engaged in mining to know where they might expect to open up mineral fields. He thought, too, that we should have more geological surveyors, so that the work could be expedited in various parts of the State at the same time. If that were done, the mining industry, which seemed to be in adverse circumstances at the present time, would receive a great benefit, and probably it would go forward and flourish as we wished to see it flourish, giving employment to a greater number of men who, owing to the fact that they had been habituated to mining all their lives, were unfitted or disinclined to engage in other occupations. He was sure that all regretted that the mining industry was not in a flourishing condition, and he thought that we should devote more attention to the baser metals, without which gold could not be procured. He was very glad to know that our coal industry was flourishing, and should like to see some encouragement given to the iron industry in this State. It was beyond doubt that we had enormous supplies of iron in Queensland, and something should be done to utilize that metal. They knew from the personal knowledge of members, and from the reports submitted by mining surveyors, that iron existed in abundance throughout the State, and yet we were doing nothing to make use of it. In 1909 the

Mr. Crawford.]

Mount Morgan Mine put through as flux more iron than was produced in New South Wales, where they had ironworks, and it was put through as waste material in order to facilitate the separation of the metals obtained in the Mount Morgan Mine. Now, when they could obtain it in such abundant quantities, the Minister would be wise, and Parliament would show no hesitation in authorising an expenditure towards facilitating the growth of the iron industry. With regard to the Miners' Phthisis Commission, whose appointment was advocated by members of the Labour party and generally by members interested in the development of mining and in the prevention of diseases from which miners were peculiarly sufferers, they would recollect the great difficulty that arose last session when the Mining Bill was before them, owing to an amendment inserted in that Bill in another place, which, if carried into effect, would have put a very large number of miners out of employment. When parties came to consider the effect of that amendment, it was patent to them that some other means must be employed; and further, they advocated the appointment of a commission to go into the whole matter, and not only to make recommendations in regard to the manner in which miners' phthisis could be prevented, but as to the manner in which those put out of employment through that cause could receive employment. They had now the very large and very instructive report of the commission before them. While he had not had time to go through all the evidence—he did not know that it was absolutely necessary to go through all the evidence—they had a very valuable report containing a large number of excellent recommendations. With regard to the evidence, he would say that there did seem to him, in following the report of the commission as they travelled through the State, that there was a reluctance on the part of miners and workers immediately concerned to come forward and give evidence. He did not know that all the causes that actuated these in remaining away were caused by reluctance. The hon. member for Woothakata said that it was fear of intimidation that kept many men away, and, whether they liked it or not, the fact remained that a very considerable prejudice existed in the minds of a large number of miners in regard to giving public evidence which might have the effect of bringing them prominently under the notice of those who employed them. That was not a condition of things peculiar to Queensland, as it was peculiar to every industrial country, and especially to those countries in which trades unions had had a long and very bitter experience, and where intimidation had been very prevalent. He was not going to say that in all of the cases the men did not come forward through intimidation. At Mount Morgan one man commented on the doleful fact that the commission was presided over by a man who wore a very severe aspect, and had a habit of asking very ugly questions which were likely to intimidate the unfortunate person coming forward to give evidence. Those who knew the hon. member for Croydon, who presided over that commission, knew that such an assertion was quite erroneous. Anyway, the fact remained that the commission did not obtain the full evidence they expected from a large number of men

who stayed away from one cause and another. The report would furnish food for thought and for legislation in the future, and it was furnishing the basis for a large number of regulations which were being arranged by the Minister. It was not necessary to go into the details of the report. He knew that after he had spoken in the House for the first time that the Mount Morgan Company straightaway installed jets and sprays, and a large number of miners who were contractors felt annoyed at being compelled to use these jets and sprays, knowing full well that to them time was money.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. CRAWFORD: While the contract system lasted, they would have men despising the methods of safety which had been arranged for them by the regulation. How long the contract system would continue was not for him to say, as it depended on the body of men themselves. They might feel contented to continue it in spite of the efforts made to discontinue it, and have in its place a wage that would give them a comfortable living. While contracting continued in mining and other directions, time was of great importance, and men who were employers of labour would utilise every fraction of time whereby their income might be augmented. He did not know if the Minister had arranged in the regulations for the time that would intervene between the firing of the first shot and the return of the men to the face to arrange for the firing of the second round of shots. It was a matter of great importance, because of the sulphur and other gases which were generated after firing the first shots, which would certainly have a detrimental effect on the conditions in the mines.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At least half an hour must elapse.

Mr. CRAWFORD: He was very glad to hear that. He knew from personal experience what it was to rush back after shots had been fired. Men were anxious to rush in and fire the second round, and leave an interval for the smoke and dust to get away before the next shift came on. Something was said in the report about the practice of spitting in mines and its bad effects. He did not know whether they need pay any attention to that. In mines it was absolutely necessary to expectorate, just as it was in other places where men worked, and they would do it no matter how many regulations were passed by Parliament to prevent it. He was very glad to see a paragraph regarding the appearance of miners. The paragraph said that there was nothing in their demeanour or appearance to distinguish them from men engaged in other employments. That was very good as characteristic of miners, but it might be misleading, because phthisis was an insidious disease which did not show itself until it had obtained a very firm grip on the constitution. With regard to the recommendations generally, he was glad that a crusade against the cause was recommended. After giving the matter some amount of thought, he believed that the best means of preventing phthisis was outside the mines, in looking to the sanitary conditions, and seeing to it that the children growing up in mining towns were brought up in healthy

Mr. Crawford.

conditions, as they would be the future miners, and see that they got healthy food. Further, they wanted to see that, after men had finished their shift, they would have a convenient change-house provided at the mouth of the mine and have a proper bath, so that they may get rid of the dust that accrued to them from their gloomy work down below.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's further time had expired.

Mr. CRAWFORD (continuing): Another remark made by the commission was the free use of alcohol as one of the predisposing causes of pulmonary complaints. He could imagine that at the Oaks Rush, or some other place, they had free use of alcohol—

Mr. COLLINS: No, no!

Mr. CRAWFORD: At any rate, it was not free at Mount Morgan, nor was he going to say it was extensively used there, but it was necessary, owing to the great amount of dust in the mine there that must go right down the gullet, that the men should have something to wash all the way through. He was speaking of three years' experience at Mount Morgan, and a longer period in other places. It was not a matter of joking at all, but he regarded it as one of actual necessity that a large percentage of men working in mines when they came off shift should have the facility of obtaining the wherewithal in the shape of a pint of beer or something else to rinse out their mouths, and to give them an appetite for the food which they must have in order to maintain their constitution. Ventilation was an important matter, and he was glad to notice that the Mount Morgan Company were spending a large sum of money in excavating a shaft from the top to the bottom of the mine, so that the whole of the galleries in that enormous mine would receive the effect of a fine flow of air, and it carried away from the working faces the smoke and dust that were now caused by the operations underneath. With regard to the regulations ordering men to leave the mines, he hoped that something would be done in the way of instituting a miners' relief fund, so that not only those depending on them would be able to obtain relief under the circumstances which they would unfortunately be placed. Before the session expired possibly a measure of that description could be introduced. With regard to the whole industry of mining, he hoped that, when they met again next year to consider the Mines Estimates, they would continue to show the tidings of very great prosperity brought about throughout the whole of Queensland.

Mr. MAY (Flinders): Unlike the hon. member who had just sat down, he was not a miner. He had been engaged mostly during his period in Australia in the pastoral industry; but, representing a large constituency which was composed [3 p.m.] chiefly of miners, he thought it was his duty to make a few remarks on the Mining Estimates. He thought the Mining Commission had done remarkably good work. He had received letters from portions of his electorate—particularly Mount Elliott and Hampden—where the commission examined a great number of men engaged in the mining industry, and

where they had no fear of the bosses and could give an unblushing statement of the facts on which they were examined.

Mr. COLLINS: The Amalgamated Workers' Association is strong there.

Mr. MAY: It was strong there, and he was proud of it. He wished the Amalgamated Workers' Association was stronger on every mining field in Australia. The commission gained the best evidence obtainable when they came into the Cloncurry district. When speaking in this Chamber on the various matters they always had a certain amount of "parish-pumpism." (Laughter.) While they went for the national good, they also tried to get the most benefit they could for their electorates. They had a warden in the Cloncurry district, whom he did not know personally, but he was doing a lot of good work. The hon. member for Burke said that exemptions had been granted too freely year after year, and that properties were lying idle which should be worked by miners who were prepared to do so. He had received a letter from a friend complaining of this. He thought it was not right that exemptions should be granted in this wholesale manner and the land not worked. He was only too happy to see that they had a man in the Cloncurry district who was carrying out his duties in the best interests of the community as a whole. (Hear, hear!) With regard to the Geological Survey Office, there was a paltry sum for 1910-11 of £33,242, and for 1911-12 it was still less, £2,492. He was surprised that it should be less, considering the great prospects there were. In his electorate there was one of the largest copper-bearing areas in the whole of the world, and it required to be properly surveyed. He was only sorry that there was such a meagre sum put down for the Geological Survey Office. They wished to have that country properly surveyed. He often saw the Minister and worried him about it, but the hon. gentleman had the Cabinet to consider, and not only that—the spirit was willing—

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: "The flesh is weak."

Mr. MAY: No, the flesh was strong, too—(laughter)—but the hon. gentleman could not do it. He (Mr. May) would like to see £20,000 put down for geological survey and research, instead of £2,000. It would pay over and over again if we spent more money to develop the mining industry. The whole of the mineral output in Queensland was £3,710,222. That was a large amount of money, but it should be double. It was an increase on the previous year of £54,000.

Mr. WELSBY: What does it cost to get it?

Mr. MAY: An infinitesimal amount was expended. (Laughter.) If they went into the question as to what it cost to get the gold in Queensland, it would possibly be about £2 15s. per oz. If more money was spent in the development of this industry, he thought it would give a better percentage than was shown in connection with dairying. It had been stated many times in the House that to develop the mining industry we must have the means of getting our products to market. No matter whether it was the pastoral, dairy, or mining industry, we must have a market for our products. The only means by which we could get this market for the mining industry was by the extension

Mr. May.]

of railways. They had had an example recently of a syndicate railway in his electorate. He was sorry it was a syndicate railway, but at the same time he was glad to see the railway there. He voted dead against it, and would do so to-morrow, but the line going into the district was a good thing; and the Government found it was a better thing to buy it back than to leave it in the hands of the company. There was at present a survey going forward for a line from Cloncurry in a north-westerly direction. They wanted the line to go from Cloncurry towards Mount Cuthbert. He had a telegram only a few nights ago, which he handed over to the Minister, asking that it should go another 2 miles further—that was to the Kingsholme, and where Kingsholme was he did not know. (Laughter.)

Mr. NEVITT: We are going to start it from the Gulf.

Mr. MAY: No; they were going to start it from Cloncurry. He felt that there should be a line carried straight through into the Gulf for the mining interest, but they had to study existing circumstances. They had a line already out to Cloncurry, and they asked for 40 miles into a splendid mining district, and next session he would want another 40 miles to go further into the country. (Laughter.) He had advocated the line to the Duchess in previous years, and they had got it now. The hon. member for Carpenteria had referred to the question of the railway running down the Leichhardt. The river flowed from the southern part in a northerly direction, and the railway should be carried up the Leichhardt.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MAY: He would take another five minutes. The railway should be carried up the Leichhardt—that was, towards the north. With regard to the Mines Regulation Act, there was a vast amount of ignorance with regard to that Act, and the Minister should distribute copies of that Act in all the mining centres, so that the miners could get some idea of the provisions of the Act. There should be 30,000 copies sent out to the different mining centres. What would it cost? Many costs were incurred in one way or another which did very little good, but if copies of the Mines Regulation Act were sent out, it would save a lot of bother and unnecessary trouble. If the Minister would give him 200 or 300 copies, he would send them out and stand the postage himself. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If the miners become as well acquainted with the provisions of the Act as the members of this Committee, who had the Bill before them and had a copy of the Act, I am afraid it will not do any good.

Mr. MAY: There was, no doubt, a great amount of truth spoken by the Secretary for Mines.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Sometimes.

Mr. MAY: He only spoke the truth when it suited his purpose. (Laughter.) With regard to the question of iron, they had a mountain of iron within 2 to 2½ miles of Cloncurry. They could pick up the iron ore, which contained 98 per cent. of iron. It was about 3 miles round that mountain, and it was about 500 feet high, and the hon. member for Burke could corroborate his statement.

| *Mr. May.*

The bell indicated that the hon. member's further time had expired.

Mr. MAY: He would take a further five minutes. They had that mountain of iron near Cloncurry, and that brought him to a matter which had not received consideration—that was the matter of a geological survey. They had in his district, if they only took the trouble to find it, large quantities of coal. It was to be found in half a dozen different districts which he could enumerate to the Minister. He brought the matter before the notice of the late Premier, the Hon. Dr. Kidston, and a special survey was made by one of the geological surveyors, who stated the coal was good enough, and the only trouble was that it was too young. Borees had been put down between Prairie and Hughenden, and between Prairie and Torens Creek, and they had found seams of coal between 4 feet and 5 feet deep. Why could they not spend a little money in developing that industry? The department was always starved. It would be a national benefit if they once obtained that commodity which they required—namely, coal. If the Secretary for Mines would commit to his supervision £2,000 to exploit the coal districts in the Fincherden district, he could guarantee to bring him coal in a few months.

Mr. COLLINS: If you got the coal you could work the iron.

Mr. MAY: Coal and iron were synonymous. They always wanted one with the other.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: And limestone.

Mr. MAY: They had any amount of limestone on the Barklay Range. If that was not an incentive to extend that railway to Mount Cuthbert, he did not know what was. They did not progress fast enough in regard to mining, while they went too far in other matters. They did not spend a modicum of money in connection with the mining industry. They did not encourage the mining people. He had an interest in a small mine himself, and he would like to get £100 from the Government to work it. (Laughter.)

Mr. TROUT: You will be a bloated capitalist then. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAY: He might be. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. TROUT: You will come over to this side then.

Mr. MAY: A lot of people would like to come over to his side only they were afraid. With regard to old fossickers—

The bell indicated that the hon. member's third allotment of time had expired.

Mr. MULCAHY wished to refer to some remarks which had fallen from the hon. member for Wide Bay. One would think from the remarks of that hon. member that he (Mr. Mulcahy) had made a personal attack on the Gympie Scottish Mine. That was not so. He did say, and still maintained, that the first thing they, as representatives of the workers—their first duty was to watch very carefully and see that there was no risk of losing life or limb. The hon. member stated that the company were doing all they possibly could to prevent accidents. If that was so, then there was no need for the Minister to send an officer up there.

Mr. WALKER: It would be far better to leave the matter to practical miners.

Mr. MULCAHY: That was a reflection on the officers of the department.

Mr. WALKER: No; but miners would be better.

Mr. MULCAHY did not want to do anything detrimental to the mining industry, but he thought it would be a good thing if the Scottish Gympie filled up certain places in their mine, as at certain parts some of the men were working at too great a height. With regard to the throwing open of mining reserves, he quite agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Wide Bay when he said they should be advertised in the same way as was done in the Lands Department; and that if there was more than one applicant for any block, it should be balloted for. He had advocated that in connection with several reserves thrown open on the Gympie Goldfield. He had not only advocated it, but had succeeded in getting certain reserves thrown open to the public at a certain time, and they all had the same opportunity. That was a very reasonable thing, and the Minister had met him in that connection.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): Although there was not much mining in his electorate, and there would be practically none at all in the new electorate, still, the prosperity of Cairns depended to a great extent on the development of the mining industry, and

anything that would assist in [8.30 p.m.] developing the great mineral reserves in the Etheridge and at other places would have his support. He was at one with the hon. member for Burke when that hon. member advocated that the Mines Department should do all they possibly could to assist miners. One hon. member spoke particularly about miners' phthisis, and alleged, very correctly, that it would be a great hardship to miners suffering from that disease if they were excluded from mining and some other suitable employment was not found for them until their health was restored. He had given the matter some consideration. In fact, during the time the commission was travelling round the State, he was wondering how we could meet the case, and he came to the conclusion that if the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Mines put their heads together, and set apart an area of fertile country for miners to take up and cultivate, they would be doing a good thing for the men who were so afflicted. They might possibly find an area like that on the Russell Extended Goldfield, where miners suffering from the disease, or partially cured, could select pieces of land and engage in farming. That land was very fertile, was well watered, and had a good rainfall, and he was of opinion that it would be a good thing if miners who had suffered from the disease, and had become cured, settled on land of that character. Again, he could see no reason why, with the huge mileage of railways that we were constructing, those men should not be given preference as lengthsmen on the railways. We shou'd do away with the age limit in such cases, and he thought that as long as men were capable of performing manual labour they should be employed as lengthsmen on the railways. If there was any fear that men who had suffered from phthisis might convey the disease to other workmen, they could be kept in a separate gang, and a doctor could go round periodi-

cally and examine them to see whether the employment suited them and whether they were getting better and stronger. In common with other members, he should like to have seen a larger sum on the Estimates for mining, but he had no reason to complain as far as his district was concerned. If he had gone to the Minister about a mining matter in his district—and it was very little that he had asked for—he had always received a very sympathetic hearing, and, on the whole, he thought the Mines Department was doing very good work. He had asked the Minister how the matter of free assays was faring, and the hon. gentleman had told him that an enormous number of parcels had been forwarded for assay. That was a very good thing for the miners, but it was not a good thing for Mareeba, where the people of his district wanted to have an assay office established. The Minister assured him that there were a large number of parcels coming to the assay office from all over Queensland, and they could not send those to Mareeba. At the same time, it would be a good thing if an assay office were established there, because the district behind Mareeba contained more minerals than any other tract of country that he knew of.

Mr. LENNON: It was distinctly promised, too.

Mr. MANN: Yes; it was promised by the late Premier, and he thought it was a great mistake for the hon. gentleman deliberately to make a promise and then break it.

Mr. THEODORE: It was a disappointment to the miners.

Mr. MANN: It was certainly a disappointment to the miners. When a certain sum of money was placed on the Estimates for the purpose of establishing an assay office at Mareeba, they looked upon the matter as practically settled. However, as he had said, it was the late Premier who was responsible for that, and he believed that if the present Minister for Mines made such a promise he would keep it.

Mr. FERRICKS: He was rather surprised on coming into the House that afternoon that the business they were engaged in was Supply. Hon. members would remember that at the close of the last sitting at an early hour that morning the Premier announced that the business to-day would be the resumption of the debate on the second reading of the Liquor Bill. While he had nothing to say against going on with the Estimates, he thought that the Premier might have told them at 1 o'clock this morning that he intended to take the Estimates, and this seemed a considerable climb down on the part of the hon. member. The hon. member for Fitzroy had stated that, taking miners all round, their appearance did not indicate that they were afflicted with miners' phthisis. It was a mistake to judge them by their appearance. His experience was that a man might be 16 stone in weight, and that he might be afflicted with the disease without being aware of it, and that in a very short period he might decrease in weight by 5 or 6 stone. He had seen that repeatedly in different parts of the State. If the statement made by the hon. member for Fitzroy was the conclusion come to by the commission, then he (Mr. Ferricks) thought they were

Mr. Ferricks.]

under a misconception. He was sorry that he was not present when the vote for the chief office was passed, because he noticed that the salary of the Under Secretary was increased from £700 to £800. He had the greatest admiration for Mr. Macdonald, who was a man who had rendered very great service to the mining industry of Queensland in years gone by, but he ventured to express the opinion—and he did so with the kindest feelings towards that gentleman—that he should retire voluntarily or compulsorily. It was a pretty hard thing to say about a man who had done good service to the State, but he viewed the matter from a strictly business standpoint, and he said unhesitatingly that if we had a younger man in his position the mining industry would benefit. Mr. Macdonald was an able man, but he was past his period of greatest use. It was, he believed, a well-known fact that he was beyond the age limit, and he thought that Mr. Macdonald, in common with one or two other Under Secretaries, should give way to a younger, more energetic, and more able man. In the event of his voluntary or compulsory retirement, he hoped the Cabinet would not put in his place some outsider who was not immediately conversant with the mining industry, as had been done in the past when the office of Under Secretary became vacant. Referring now to another question, he thought the Government should do something in regard to the development of coalfields, particularly in the North of Queensland. The necessity for doing this work was increasing every day, and the longer it was delayed the more keenly would the matter be felt. In the vicinity of Bowen there were large coal areas awaiting development. The Minister for Mines had promised a deputation that he would send a geologist there to put down borings and make tests, but the Geological Survey Department was rather long-winded. The Minister for Mines had several times made profession of his State socialism. Well, here was an opportunity for the hon. gentleman to put his socialistic principles into operation, and start a State coalmine. State coalmines had been established in other States with satisfactory results, and we might very well start one in Queensland. If such a mine were opened in the North it would be an advantage to the Railway Department, to shipping, to sugar-mills, and even to the mining industry. The wood supply was petering out in some districts, and crushing mills were going in for coal as a fuel instead. There was one phase of the mining industry that had not been touched upon as far as he had observed, and that was the inspection of machinery and boilers on mining fields. He was informed by the hon. member for Croydon that the matter came under the machinery and scaffolding vote, but he drew the attention of the Minister to the fact that at one place in North Queensland there was a boiler that had not been inspected for three years; in fact, ever since the boiler was erected. In mining fields and outside camps they had amateur engine-drivers who thought they could drive an engine when there was no inspection, but that was fraught with serious danger. He hoped the matter would be brought under the notice of the inspector of machinery, and that that boiler would be inspected.

Mr. MURPHY (*Croydon*): He had not intended to speak at all on the vote but for the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen

[*Mr. Ferricks.*]

with respect to the Under Secretary. So far as he (Mr. Murphy) was concerned, he considered that Mr. Macdonald was the right man in the right place.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY: Mr. Macdonald, after being warden in various centres, was also warden on the Etheridge Goldfield, and there were many old fossickers in that district today who spoke very kindly of the assistance which Mr. Macdonald gave them when he was warden. So far as he had been able to ascertain, no warden had ever endeared himself to the outside population as the present Under Secretary for Mines had done. (Hear, hear!) He considered that Mr. Macdonald did everything possible to advance the industry, and they should not blame him because he did not do everything that mining members wanted. The Under Secretary was bound down by the Ministry and by the Government. He had a certain amount of money to spend, and he had to divide that amongst all the gold and other mineral fields in the State.

Mr. THEODORE: We will give him more.

Mr. MURPHY: They might be prepared to give him more, but they were not in the position to give it. That depended on the Government, and the Minister had to be bound by his colleagues and by the Treasury. It was unfair to blame the Under Secretary for not doing things that it was impossible for him to do with the money at his disposal. The hon. member for Bowen complained that the Under Secretary was old. He did not think a young man could do the departmental work that Mr. Macdonald was doing. (Hear, hear!) He had to have a good knowledge of mining and he had to form a judgment quickly upon evidence in connection with exemptions and other matters submitted to him. Mr. Macdonald was most sympathetic in all these matters. They should not find fault with the Under Secretary because he was getting old.

Mr. FERRICKS: He has not enough energy.

Mr. MURPHY: He put plenty of energy into his reports, which compared favourably with the reports of Under Secretaries for Mines in any of the other States of the Commonwealth. Mr. Macdonald had done rough work on the mining fields, and had been through the office; he had been an excellent warden, and nothing could be said against him since he had been Under Secretary. He remembered when he was appointed by Mr. Philp, the then Minister for Mines, that Messrs. Browne, Dawson, Dunsford, and other members of the Labour party congratulated the Minister for making the appointment. With regard to the age limit, when Mr. Macdonald, the police magistrate, was retired on account of old age, the members of the Labour party asked that he be given some other employment, and it was because of that that he received his present appointment. Labour members were not too keen in enforcing the old-age provision, and they should not enforce it in this case.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He can be kept on from year to year for five years.

Mr. MURPHY: He did not know if he would come back to the House after the next election, but he hoped that if he did Mr. Macdonald would still be Under Secretary for Mines. (Hear, hear!)

LIEUT-COLONEL RANKIN (*Burrun*): He would like to say a few words on the Mines

Estimates, as it was an industry that was very near to his heart. He always liked to listen to an intelligent debate on the Mines Estimates, though he did not think that the speeches from some hon. members showed much intelligence. The report of the department was one that reflected great credit on the department and on the Under Secretary. Mr. Macdonald was an excellent head of the department, and he was surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen. It seemed to him to be a cowardly thing to make an attack on a man who had not the privilege of defending himself. In any censure which they had to make they should always make sure of their facts first. He had been intimately associated with Mr. Macdonald and came into contact with him a great deal, and he always found him desirous of placing the best information at his disposal, and in such a manner that it seemed a pleasure for him to do so. He echoed the feelings of members opposite when he said that the Mines Department was a starved department. It was the smallest department from the point of view of expenditure. It produced for the country £2,000,000 in gold and over £1,000,000 of other minerals last year, and yet it was proposed to spend only £55,000 upon the industry this year. The industry deserved more consideration than it was receiving at the present time. He would like to see the vote for prospecting and deep sinking very considerably increased. He was glad to see from the report that there was an increase in the coal output. The number of collieries were increased by three, the output of coal increased by 111,539 tons, the value increased by £52,027, and the total output was 571,176 tons. That was a very considerable improvement, and was due to the energy put into the matter by the Mines Department itself. When they noticed that only £55,000 was put down on the Estimates for this year, they must remember that last year, through the Railway Department alone, there came in revenue the sum of £232,616. That was the revenue received by the Government for freights on coal and other minerals; consequently, the Government could afford to give them more to develop their mineral resources throughout the State, especially when they remembered that it was not the first time in Queensland or in Australia that the mining industry had been their salvation. More money should be given for deep sinking and exploration

[9 p.m.] work, and they would be sure to get a good return for the money expended upon it. He was amused in listening to some speakers talking about the inspection of mines. The Mines Department had to be judged by results, and if anybody took the trouble to turn up page 2 of the Mines Report they would see the number of accidents for the year—

"The death rate per 1,000 persons employed in 1910 was, in metalliferous mines, 1.45; in coalmines, 1.64; in all mines (including mills and reduction works), 1.14."

He submitted that these figures showed that very careful attention had been paid to the various mines.

Mr. THEODORE: That is no criterion.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: It was a distinct criterion; it compared very favourably with the figures obtaining in other States.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: There are as many accidents this year as there were six years ago, with 4,000 more men employed.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: We compared very favourably with other people, and that was the standard to go by. They knew that as mining advanced greater risks had to be adopted. Many factors came into consideration, and he was sure it was not the fault of our inspectors; but the percentage of accidents was comparatively low. Coming back to the question of coal, there was some assistance given for the first time to develop the coalfields in his electorate.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: How much was it?

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: The actual amount expended in the Howard district was £500, in Torbanlea district £955, so that it had been fairly well distributed; but he did not think that that was sufficient. In to-night's *Maryborough Chronicle* he noticed the Torbanlea correspondent quoted these figures—

"In the early part of last year, Mr. J. C. Bellert put down a hand bore, 109 feet, on his property at Burgowan, and in one of my reports I stated that he bored through a seam of coal 4 feet thick, and some people abused me at that time for making such an absurd report. It will be remembered that Mr. Bellert afterwards put down a small trial shaft at some distance north-east of the hand bore, and struck the seam at 59 feet. It was then about 2 feet 6 inches or 2 feet 9 inches thick. He afterwards put in a tunnel on to the coal, where the seam was 2 feet 6 inches, and worked it in the hope that it would be 4 feet by the time he reached where he had put down the bore, but he continued for some time in vain, as the seam did not get any bigger, though he was daily getting nearer to the bore. Still he was not daunted, but persevered until the week before last the seam increased to 3 feet 6 inches, and about the end of last week it was 3 feet 9 inches thick, and clean coal at that. As he still has some distance to go before he reaches the bore, this is highly satisfactory, and Mr. Bellert is to be congratulated upon his success."

Where a comparatively poor man like Mr. Bellert was expending this large sum of money in trying to discover coal which lay between Torbanlea and Pialba, it was desirable that the Government should extend some assistance to make sure that the exploration work had been completely carried out. He would like to refer to the report of the Mining Commission. He had gone through the greater portion of it very carefully, and the department were to be congratulated not only on the report but also on the satisfactory manner in which they had carried out their work, and perhaps even more so on the fact that they had not discovered that that great amount of miners' phthisis existed which they used to hear so very much about. He was pleased it was so, because the miner's life was not altogether a happy one, although in most cases it was a fairly remunerative one, and those engaged in this industry were only too anxious that it should not only be profitable to individual men employed, but that it should also be as healthy and safe as possible. He hoped that it might be possible, on the Supplementary Estimates, to see some increase in the amount for deep sinking and also for prospecting. He again expressed his congratulations both on the nature of the report and the manner in which it was placed before them.

Mr. DOUGLAS (*Cook*): It seemed to him that each year they had much about the same sum placed on the Estimates for the mining industry. They had been assured by leaders of past Governments—particularly Mr. Kidston—that anything reasonable in the way of assistance to mining

Mr. Douglas.]

would be given, whether the amounts were on the Estimates or not. He had not got up to make any lengthy remarks, but, as his district was largely associated with mining, it became necessary to say something, although he did not intend for a moment to work what was termed the "parish pump." He should like to congratulate the Government on the able manner in which the Under Secretary had at all times issued his report, which gave a lot of valuable information and statistics, which were looked forward to throughout the country with greater interest every year. The department was exceedingly efficiently manned, from the Under Secretary down. The Under Secretary was, in his opinion, a most eminently suitable and qualified man for this position, and he should be very sorry to see any change made. Mr. Macdonald's experience in various parts of Queensland—particularly the remote parts—in his capacity as warden, was of the greatest service to the State. He hoped there would be no question of superseding him, although he might possibly be getting towards the age limit. The mining industry, taking it as a whole, had for several years past been somewhat in the background, owing to the fact that the pastoral and other industries in the State had been very progressive. It was well known that in years gone by, when droughts had overtaken the country, the mining industry had been a stand-by, and no doubt it would be so in the future. We could not expect so much development in mining matters when people found an outlet both for their labour and capital in the more prosperous industries of the State during good seasons, but he did not take a pessimistic view of the present state of the industry, because he felt sure that it would revive, and that we would later on increase our output of gold and different minerals. He was pleased to see that the coalmining industry was looking up. He thought that we had in Queensland seams of coal which would be a great national asset. He did not want to say anything about State batteries, but he noticed that at a deputation to the Minister for Mines some little further assistance was given to a certain company or syndicate of miners in the Etheridge district. He hoped that that would meet with some result, because in the mining districts that were being opened up, particularly in the new fields, where there were no milling appliances, it was very difficult to get stone crushed until batteries were got on the ground, and it was not always possible to arrange for working miners who had perhaps very little money to get people to bring along the crushing batteries unless they gave away a large share of their claims. He hoped that this would lead to an extension of further assistance, so as to give working miners an opportunity of crushing at their own mills. There was one feature in connection with the assistance of mining that he had always advocated, and that was to provide the means of transit, particularly in the way of constructing or keeping in repair the roads. His district was one of those which had no communication by means of railways or rivers, and they depended very largely on the roads. During the last two wet seasons the roads had been cut to pieces, and made impassable sometimes, and the shire council, which had to keep several

[*Mr. Douglas.*]

thousand miles of road in repair, was naturally not in a good financial position, and the expenditure of an amount from the vote towards these roads was very desirable in a district such as the Cook. He had nothing to complain about in regard to the assistance given in this direction, because the Government had been very liberal. He thought some reference had been made to the Palmer field at Maytown, which had a history second to none, but it had been languishing for a good many years past. There was a petition from that district to build a railway, but the difficulty was to convince the House that the railway would pay. The Minister for Mines, when he visited the North, gave some assistance which was very much appreciated in the form of making a road from Laura to Maytown in a much more passable condition than it had been for many years past. It was a very steep ascent to Maytown, and the road was in very bad repair, and the Minister granted £1,000 to put it in decent order. There was a justification for a large sum of money being spent on this road, because a company had taken up the leases at Maytown, and expended several thousand pounds. They were only asking for assistance to put the road in repair, and, seeing that they were prepared to take on the work of deep sinking, it was only fair to put the road in decent repair. Possibly, at some future date, if development took place on that field, they would get an extension of the line from Laura to Palmerville. Railways running to mining fields were very often of a speculative nature, and the line to Laura had been carried on at a loss for several years. He wished to express the appreciation of the people of that district for the assistance they had received in the way of getting their roads repaired. The question of roads and mail facilities were two of the most important factors in keeping in touch with those who were pioneering on the Northern mining fields. He was very pleased to see an increase had been granted in the salary of the Under Secretary, and he (Mr. Douglas) hoped that gentleman would long continue the permanent head of that department.

Mr. CORSER (*Maryborough*): Appreciating the value of the mining industry, as every man must do who had resided in Queensland when Gympie pulled the State out of financial difficulties, he had always taken a very keen interest in it ever since, and he was rather disappointed that there was no increase worth speaking of in the salaries paid to geologists. They were not paying their geologists the same rate as was paid elsewhere, and surely it could not be argued as a reason for that, that there was not sufficient work to be done in Queensland, because no other State in Australia, with the exception perhaps of Western Australia, had anything like the amount of work to be done that Queensland had. With our enormous auriferous territory in Queensland we should get the best metal material, and pay the best price for it. He believed they had good material, from the Under Secretary down. They had a sympathetic Minister, and the geologists he had come in touch with had impressed him as being good men and well up to their work; and for those reasons he hoped the Under Secretary would see his way either on the Supplementary Estimates, or, at any rate, next year, to make provision for better salaries

for the geologists and also for an increase in the number. It must be gratifying to notice the progress that had been made generally in mining, notwithstanding that in gold there had been a falling off. In Gympie no less than 59,205 oz. of fine gold were produced in the year 1910. That was not as much as was produced in previous years, but with the information supplied by geologists there was likely to be better results in the future. It was gratifying also to note that the return for reef gold from Gympie and surrounding districts amounted to £250,332 as against Mount Morgan £245,149. Then, again, there was room for investigation into the coal measures. The hon. member for Burrum had referred to some recent finds in his district. The Crown held very large areas of land in that district that were supposed to be coal-bearing, and he was pleased to learn that the Hon. the Minister had recently given instructions for a thorough investigation of that country. Page 17 of the mines report stated—

"The actual quantity of coal imported during the year is probably about 45,000 tons." They knew that coke, to a large extent, was being imported also, and therefore there was great room for development in that industry, at any rate to enable them to produce from the ground the actual coal and coke required for their own industries, and there was no reason why, with the large areas of land known to be coal-bearing, they should not be large exporters of that article. As good coke had been made in the Burrum district as any that had been imported from the Southern ports. He would like the Minister to see that the money paid in aid to prospecting was better distributed, and the only way in which it could be better distributed would be by a better knowledge being available in the different districts that had large areas of auriferous country. If the clerk of petty sessions at such places as Gayndah were furnished with particulars of the assistance given to prospectors, a good many people in that district would go out, and it was a district that had very large possibilities. It would be of advantage if some little advertisement appeared in the local paper in Gayndah that money was available for assistance in prospecting.

Mr. COLLINS: They would get a thousand applicants in my district alone if the Government advertised.

Mr. CORSER: What was the expenditure of a few thousand pounds if they got another Mount Morgan, another Charters Towers, or another Gympie? What had Gympie been to Queensland? It had been one of the best fields.

Mr. LENNON: You must have been reading the late Government's advertisements in the English papers to encourage immigrants.

Mr. CORSER: Possibly before the persons who wrote those advertisements were in existence, he knew all about those fields.

Mr. FERRICKS could not conceive how hon. members, by any stretch of the imagination, could consider that he had made an attack on Mr. MacDonald, as had been referred to by the hon. member for Burrum and the hon. member for Croydon. He (Mr. Ferricks) did not make an attack on Mr. Macdonald. He just stated his opinion, and as a representative he had a right to express his opinion regarding any civil servant in

the State. It was time Mr. Macdonald either voluntarily or was compulsorily retired, because he was not worth £800 a year. He knew all the hon. member for Croydon had stated about the value of Mr. Macdonald's reports. He (Mr. Ferricks) had read Mr. Macdonald's reports with a great amount of interest for the last fifteen years, and having had eight or nine years' experience of mining, he held he was in a position to judge of the value of those reports. He admitted they were valuable, so much so that he had sent copies of the last reports to friends in New Guinea, in New South Wales, and in Western Australia. But taking the report, what did it amount to? It amounted to fifteen or sixteen pages of ordinary comment which might be produced by any mining newspaper man. It was really an annotation or summary of the wardens' reports, and that service was not worth £800 a year to the Government of Queensland.

Licut.-Colonel RANKIN: Is that all he does?

Mr. FERRICKS: That was all that was claimed by the hon. member for Burrum.

Mr. MURPHY: I claimed he did more than that.

Mr. FERRICKS: Mr. Macdonald should be up to date, and he was not up to date regarding the mining industry in Queensland, despite the fact that he was an old warden and had experience of every mine in Queensland. Hon. members knew that the conditions on mining fields changed, and that the conditions of ten years ago, [9.30 p.m.] when Mr. Macdonald was senior warden, did not hold good to-day. His contention was that the Under Secretary of the Mines Department should go about the country. It was more necessary that the Under Secretaries should travel over the State than it was that Ministers should do so, for when Ministers visited different parts of Queensland they were electioneering.

Mr. LENNON: Or junketing.

Mr. FERRICKS: Or junketing; but when an Under Secretary went out he was out for knowledge. During the last recess he saw no less than four Under Secretaries up North, and he had reason to know that the knowledge they picked up during their travels was of more advantage to the North of Queensland than all the junkettings of Ministers during the last twenty years. He contended that the work done by Mr. Macdonald in compiling his annual report did not justify an increase of £160 in his salary.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. member is going a little too far. He is not in order in discussing the salary of the Under Secretary on this vote. That question was disposed of in the previous vote, and the hon. member is not in order in discussing it again on the vote before the Committee.

Mr. FERRICKS: He held that the Under Secretary was the chief of the wardens of Queensland, because he had jurisdiction over all wardens and over all goldfields.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He has not the jurisdiction of a warden.

Mr. FERRICKS: It would be better for mining if he had.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. FERRICKS: He had five minutes more. He contended that the Mines Department wanted shaking up. It was running

Mr. Ferricks.]

the Agricultural Department close for the cap of the sleepy department. The report, which is was contended justified the increase of £100 a year to the Under Secretary, could be turned out by any up-to-date mining journalist at £200 a year.

Mr. MURPHY: You might apply the same argument to other Under Secretaries.

Mr. FERRICKS: It might be applied to other Under Secretaries, and he would deal with other Under Secretaries when they came to them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under Secretaries are not now under discussion, and the hon. member will not be in order in referring to them.

Mr. FERRICKS: Coming back to Mr. Macdonald, he would remind hon. members that this was the era of young men in commercial, legal, theological, and other walks of life. This was the time of the new school, and elderly gentlemen who had passed the best years of their service were taking a back seat, and the State had no right to retain the services of people who were not earning their salaries. The Under Secretary of this department was not earning his salary or anything approaching it.

Mr. D. HUNTER rose to a point of order. Were they discussing the Under Secretary's salary, which had already been passed by the Committee, or were they not?

The CHAIRMAN: I have drawn the attention of the hon. member to the fact that he is not in order in discussing the Under Secretary's salary, and if he persists in the course he is following I shall have to deal with him.

Mr. FERRICKS: There was no question raised as to an infringement of the Standing Orders when other members referred to the Under Secretary and his work. He held, as he had already said, that the Under Secretary was the head of the wardens, and that he had a perfect right to refer to his office and to the emoluments he received. Once more he said that the present Under Secretary should be compulsorily retired, if he did not voluntarily do so. With regard to what the hon. member for Woothakata had said about miners' phthisis, and the statement of the Minister that people in the early stage of the disease were not visibly affected, he wished to say that that all depended upon the victim's physique. The other day he met a mate of his in Brisbane. The man looked as well as the Chairman did, and when he told him (Mr. Ferricks) that he had come from the Dalby Sanatorium, where he had been for twelve months, and that he was returning there, he was more surprised than he could express. It was quite evident that a man's state of health could not be gauged by his outward appearance. At any rate, he trusted that the Minister would make it more widely known that victims of this scourge could go to the Dalby Sanatorium at the first indication of the disease.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's full time had expired.

Mr. COLLINS: With regard to the remarks made by the hon. member for Bowen concerning the Under Secretary of the Mines Department, he thought it would be a sorry day for the House if members were to be debarred from criticising an Under Secretary simply because they came into contact with him in the performance of their duties as

representatives. He was not going to kowtow to any Under Secretary or any Minister. He had been sent into Parliament as a representative of the people, and he had equal rights and privileges with Ministers or Under Secretaries. Supposing an Under Secretary was polite to members, what did we pay him £800 a year for? The people of Queensland paid his salary, and when he went to an Under Secretary's office he expected to be treated as a man.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee is that the sum of £23,331 be granted for "Goldfields."

Mr. COLLINS: Well, getting away from that question, he wished to say a few words with reference to a quotation made by the hon. member for Moreton from the report of the Under Secretary, out of which the hon. member made a little capital with respect to the Etheridge Goldfield. The quotation was as follows:—

"Altogether 150 mines contributed to the total gold yield, as against 120 in 1909; and, roughly speaking, 600 men were engaged in goldmining, besides 284 in mining for minerals other than gold. No dividends were declared, and calls made amounted to £3,628."

From that quotation persons outside might think that the Etheridge field was a failure. Yet just a few lines before that it was stated that—

"The Oaks has had a prosperous year, and seems likely to be equally successful this year."

He found that Mr. Fletcher Young, in his evidence before the Mines Commission, stated that at that time there were only twenty men engaged working on wages on the Oaks, and it would be apparent to anyone who knew anything about mining that, where there were 150 mines and 600 men were employed, that was an average of four men to each mine, which showed that the bulk of the mining carried on on the Etheridge was done by miners who were not working for wages. Some men earned £1,000 last year on the Etheridge.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: "Boodle."

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member who made that interjection thought that every man who earned £1,000 in a year was a "boodler," but he could tell the hon. member that plenty of men who earned £1,000 or £1,500 in a year were as big democrats as the man who was now talking.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. BRESLIN (*Port Curtis*) agreed with those members who had spoken in appreciation of the Mines Department. His experience of the Mines Department had been very favourable indeed, and he considered it one of the best departments with which members had to deal. Leaving out the question of Mr. Macdonald's age, he held that the salary of the Under Secretary had only been brought into line with those of other Under Secretaries, and therefore that members could not complain. The hon. member for Bowen made a very good suggestion when he stated that it would be a good thing if Under Secretaries travelled a little more over the State. He (Mr. Breslin) would go further, and say that the chief clerk, Mr. Marshall, and other officials should also travel. It had been said that the officials of the Mines Department were only office men, who knew nothing about outside work. While there might be some

[*Mr. Ferricks.*]

justification for that, he must say that he had always found the officials to have all necessary information. Still, he considered that it would be a good thing that either Mr. Macdonald or Mr. Marshall should be travelling about the State while the other was in the office in Brisbane. Queensland was a big place, and the mining areas were in the North and Centre, and it would be to the benefit of the State and the Mines Department if one of its officers were travelling, in addition to the Chief Inspector of Mines. The hon. member for Burke raised the point about the warden at Gladstone getting more salary than the warden at the Etheridge. He did not know anything about the Etheridge, but he could say that the warden at Gladstone earned every penny of salary that he got. He had a big district to look after, and he travelled over it as much as he could. He was also police magistrate there.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He is getting old, and that is a crime in the eyes of the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. BRESLIN: The hon. member for Burke compared the salaries of the two men. The warden at Gladstone had to visit Many Peaks also, and he thought it was time that a mining registrar was stationed at Many Peaks. He could also act as clerk of petty sessions. There were too many exemptions granted to mining companies in his district. He was told that at Glassford Creek one company had eight years of exemptions in eleven years. Recently the warden at Gladstone refused to grant an exemption to this company, but they were able to get exemption in Brisbane from the Mines Department. He had no objection to companies that had spent a lot of money being allowed exemption to enable them to get more capital, but in some instances there were companies that did practically nothing, only scratched the surface, and yet were granted exemptions. The big company at Glassford Creek opened up one lease called the Blue Bag, and spent a lot of money on it. There was some justification for an exemption being granted to them for that particular lease. At Mount Hector the company had spent a lot of money, and there was some justification for an exemption there. The Mount Cannindah Company had practically dismantled their works, and he failed to see why any further exemption should be given. He claimed some assistance in the way of providing portable batteries for his district. They saw in the warden's report a reference to the Tableland, which was not very far from the sea coast, but it was over bad roads. The Georgiana Extended lease there crushed 500 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons for a return of 965 oz. 12 dwt. 2 gr. of gold, but it was situated in a most inaccessible place. The last 13 miles of the road to the Tableland was so bad that it took six hours to traverse it by coach. It was difficult to get supplies and materials there and to get the product away. The vote for roads and bridges should be specially extended for places like that. The men at the Georgiana had done their best and made a little money out of it, but such a field wanted the assistance of a State battery. A man had a battery there, but it is stated in the warden's report that it cost £1 1s. a week for firewood to run it. The Georgiana owners then put their capital together and bought a battery of

their own, and they erected a suction gas plant which only cost them 2s. 6d. a week for charcoal. On a field like that the Government should give some assistance to enable the claims to be proved. He was surprised that the Minister granted a lease to a syndicate for the Callide Coalfield, instead of opening it as a State mine. He remembered when the first syndicate proved the field and got a Railway Bill through Parliament; but for reasons of their own they did not go on with it. Since he had come into the House he had been advocating for the Minister to take it over as a State coalfield. There were several paragraphs in the report issued by the Mines Department which he would read. They were as follows:—

“The syndicate has leases covering 2,560 acres of country, and has proved the existence of coal over the whole area by sinking shafts.

“The trouble is there is so much coal that many persons think it cannot be true. When Mr. Rands, late Government Geologist, inspected the property in 1891, he reported that the prospecting work done up to the time of his visit revealed an average thickness of 21 feet. Allowing only one-half of this as available, he calculated the total weight of available coal at 50,000,000 tons, and he added that there was sufficient to last 150 years, with an annual output equal to that of the whole of the colony at the time when he wrote.

“Since Mr. Rands's visit new shafts have been sunk and old shafts deepened, with the result that the quantity of coal exposed is at least twice what it was known to be in 1901.

“Following the extension of time allowed by Parliament for the construction of the railway, steps were taken as regards testing the coal, and a bulk shipment of some 52 tons was sent out and tested on board H.M.S. ‘Torch,’ in November, 1903.

“The following are particulars of this test as published in the *Queensland Government Mining Journal* of January, 1904:—

“TEST OF CALLIDE CREEK COAL.

“The warden of Gladstone (Mr. Jas. Bracewell) has forwarded to the Mines Department a copy of the official report of the test recently made of Callide Creek coal on H.M.S. ‘Torch.’ Warden Bracewell, in a memo. accompanying the report says:—“The coal used was taken from No. 3 shaft, situate on mineral lease No. 54, where the seam penetrated was 45 feet in thickness and the shaft about 73 feet in depth. I am informed about 30 tons was taken out at a depth of about 65 feet, but, on account of the heavy water, operations had to cease here, and the balance of the coal, 25 tons, was taken out at a depth of 45 feet, a staging being put across the shaft.”

“Remarks.—Fires were primed and topped in the usual manner. Fire bars were spaced in the usual way for Australian coals. Steam was raised without difficulty in the usual time. No difficulty was experienced in maintaining a constant supply of steam at full power.

“Coal burns readily, cleanly, and quickly; a fire of medium thickness gave best results. The coal is of a peaty or woody nature. There is no swelling or sticking together in its burning, but each piece burns independently to the end. Ash and dirt formed after steaming two hours at full power at the bottom of the fires; this was easily removed by prickers made of suitable lengths, so that they could not disturb the general body of the fires. Ashes were of a fine nature, but no trace of unconsumed coal was found among them. A slight clinker formed after twenty-four hours' steaming. This was easily removed, and the amount was inappreciable.

“Nothing detrimental has occurred to smoke-boxes, uptakes, or funnel.

“No undue temperature was registered in the stokehold or backs of boilers. This coal

Mr. Breslin.]

was used to the amount of 7 tons for auxiliary purposes in one boiler, with only half the grate area in use. No difficulty was experienced in any way in maintaining a constant supply of steam.

"The amount of Callide Creek coal supplied to ship was 55 tons. Fifty-two tons have been consumed; the remaining 3 tons are still in the ship.

"(Sd.) H. J. O. MILLER, Commander,

"(Sd.) J. STEVENS, Art. Engineer."

"The next action taken in connection with the field appears to have been an official examination with a view of further boring and testing, and the following is from a copy of the report in connection with the matter by Mr. L. C. Ball, Assistant Government Geologist, who made the inspection in December, 1905:—

"As a result, I have come to the conclusion that the field is even more extensive than provisionally mapped by Mr. Rands, and that it continues perhaps almost to Kilbirnie.

"*Work Done.*—The shafts are seven in number—all, except No. 4, on the banks of creeks, and they were sunk—Mr. Otty, one of the prospectors, assured me—entirely at haphazard. From my own observations, I think it very probable that the coal struck in shafts (taking them from west to east) Nos. 7, 3, 1, 2, 4, and 5 is one and the same seam; and further, from Mr. Blain's survey, that No. 6 shaft is on the continuation of that seam. The extent proved from east to west is 2½ miles, and from north to south 1½ miles.

"The seam has been proved (in No. 7 shaft) at 131 feet below the surface, but the coal tested on H.M.S. "Torch" came from No. 3 shaft, in which the seam was struck at 28 feet depth. Further, No. 3 shaft is on the bank of a creek, and coal at such a shallow depth in such a location must certainly have been affected by meteoric waters, and, therefore, have been in an inferior condition when raised. If a test sample were taken from a shaft sunk some distance from a creek, much better results would be obtained on testing." That looked an ideal place for a State coalfield. The Dawson tests were not successful yet; the boring plant was kept there, although they were promised by the Minister that it would be removed to the Callide.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. BRESLIN (continuing): The Minister promised the previous Chamber of Commerce that no leases would be granted before the boring plant had been sent to the Callide so that it could be properly tested.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The promise was never made by me.

Mr. BRESLIN: He was told that the promise was made. Yet the Minister granted it to a syndicate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: I could not tie up a great field like that.

Mr. BRESLIN: The boring plant should have been brought from the Dawson to the Callide long ago, and it should be worked as a State coalfield, but the Minister gave 4 square miles of lease to a syndicate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It was not a lease; it was a license that they were granted. It is all according to the regulations and the Act.

Mr. BRESLIN: There were many things done that were not according to the Act and the regulations—for instance, the exemptions that were granted. (Hear, hear!)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You had your opportunity when the Act was going through last year.

Mr. MULLAN: It was gagged through, and we could not get in any of our amendments.

[*Mr. Breslin.*]

Mr. BRESLIN: The Callide Field was very extensive, and he was still hopeful that they would have it as a State coalfield. He was speaking to Mr. Otty, the principal prospector of that field. He had told him last Monday that on this side of the range at Collet Creek they would find coal. The field was very extensive. Even if the Minister had seen fit to grant these licenses or leases on that field he was hopeful that he would bring the plant over.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is all arranged for.

Mr. BRESLIN: Would he bring it down the range to Collet Creek?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He is going to bring it down where Mr. Ball recommends the bore should be carried out.

Mr. BRESLIN: The hon. member for Burke asks if the Minister will give instructions.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It will be according to the recommendation of the geologist. He has got his instructions to go over the whole of the field. The portions for which the licenses have been granted have been practically decided. We want to examine that portion of the field that has not been tested.

Mr. BRESLIN was not objecting to this field being opened up by a company, provided the company were going to work it.

The district had been absolutely [10 p.m.] cursed in the past by leases being granted and then being tied up.

There were numbers of people who would have taken up leases in various parts and worked them if they had had the chance, but everything big had been tied up. He knew that the licenses of these 4 square miles had been granted, and more had been applied for by people who were going to dummy it until they saw some opening taking place.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: There are no further applications.

Mr. BRESLIN trusted that the Minister would see that the field was fully tested, and the plant brought down to Collet Creek, and that they would have a coalmine there. The report he had quoted from showed that you could not beat the Callide in all Queensland for a State coalmine. Then at Gladstone they had the best harbour in Queensland, and, perhaps, in Australia.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. BRESLIN (continuing): He had heard shipping men say that Gladstone Harbour was easier to go into than Sydney. The field would only be about 40 miles from Calliope, on the Bonye Valley line. If the coal was found on Collet Creek there could be no false alarm raised about engineering difficulties. There would be the Calliope Valley to run through, and the coalmine would be at the foot of the range. He had been told that it was foolish to advocate this just now, for the Dawson Valley line might be carried on to Callide because the Dawson Valley State mine was not too promising. It might be carried on to the Callide, but he did not think there was any fear of that, because the distance would kill it. He hoped to hear in the near future that the Minister had seen fit to proclaim a State coalfield on the Callide. It was not because it was in his district—as a matter of fact,

he understood a good deal was cut out of his electorate, but he happened to know a good deal about it, having lived all his life in the district.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He thought it a regrettable incident that the matter of the capability of the Under Secretary was introduced into this discussion. After three years' experience he knew no more capable, active, or experienced man—no man more fitted to undertake the duties and responsibilities of Under Secretary for Mines—than the present holder of the office.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: A man of the ripest experience—experience which covered the whole of the State of Queensland—whose mind was evenly balanced, and who extended to everyone who came into contact with him in connection with the work of the department that justice which was so essential and necessary in the administration of the Mines Department.

Mr. COLLINS: No one said to the contrary.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Well then, there appeared to be amongst certain members on the other side a feeling that old age was a crime.

Mr. MAUGHAN: No fear; and Opposition dissent.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: If that was so, why was it suggested that if the Under Secretary would not retire voluntarily then he should be compulsorily retired, the only objection to the Under Secretary being that he had attained a certain age? He had not heard that he lacked activity or that his sense were failing, but simply because he had reached a certain age apparently—he did not know whether it was part of the policy of members on that side—

Mr. LENNON: You know it is not.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Why should the deputy leader of the Opposition sit silent and hear his supporters—

OPPOSITION interjections and dissent.

Mr. MAUGHAN rose to a point of order.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: What is the point of order? (Laughter.) When anything was said on this side which touched members on that side, the hon. gentleman listened silently to his supporters bringing such charges—

Mr. LENNON (shouting): No charges.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (also shouting): Such charges—

Mr. LENNON (shouting): No charges. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (shouting): Such charges against such a worthy and respected officer as the Under Secretary for Mines, and attempted, as the deputy leader of the Opposition did, to drown his (Mr. Appel's) voice. (Laughter.) Reverting to what he was saying before the hon. gentleman by his unseemly interruption attempted to drown his voice, it appeared that hon. members on that side regarded it as a crime—

Mr. LENNON: Nothing of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That a man should have reached a certain age, and, having reached that age, should be cast upon the scrap-heap.

Mr. MAUGHAN: Are you looking for "lash"?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He was quite willing to take it and to give it back again.

Mr. LENNON: You will get it back again.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: So far as he was concerned, it would be by standing up for that which was right, and he considered that it was right and just that he should stand up for an officer whose only crime, apparently, in the eyes of certain members was that he had reached a certain age, and therefore should retire or be compulsory retired and cast upon the scrap heap.

Mr. RYAN: You enforce that rule in the lower positions, you know.

Mr. LENNON: The lengthsmen are turned out—don't forget that.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: In the stokehole of the "Otter" is a man who is beyond the age limit, but who is capable of carrying out his duties. Year after year I request the Public Service Board to continue him in the service. That request is always acceded to.

Mr. THEODORE: The Government consider it a crime in some cases for a man to be old.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It seemed also to be an extraordinary thing that after he had made it clear, when the Estimates were discussed last year, that owing to a typographical error Mr. Macdonald's increase of £100 did not so appear, and although he had explained it when these Estimates were being discussed last week, members could continue to talk of it as an increase for this year. He hoped there would be no further misconception so far as that was concerned. The hon. member for Gympie discussed the matter of the geologist's branch. Undoubtedly the geologist's branch had been very busy; at the same time they had carried out considerable investigations in the Etheridge. Mr. Marks had carried out a very careful geological survey, and all his maps and reports were being prepared, and the object was not alone the carrying out of that particular survey, but where land geologically was not required for mining purposes, and it was suitable for settlement, investigation could be made so that those portions of land might be surrendered to the Lands Department for the purpose of closer settlement. Miners would thus be able to take up a piece of land where their families might settle, and which, in case of the industry not prospering, they might use for the purpose of making a livelihood. A similar geological investigation was being carried out at Charters Towers for the purpose of ascertaining what portion of the goldfield reserve might be surrendered to the Lands Department for the purpose of closer settlement.

Mr. MULLAN: The Premier allowed the people of Charters Towers to be robbed of Eumorra Lakes.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He was not concerned in that matter. He was discussing the action which had been taken by the Mines Department, and he simply wished to give hon. members the information as to what was actually being done by the geologists of the department.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I hope you won't turn the reserves over to the Lands Department.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: It had only been mentioned in the Committee to-night by members on both sides of the

Hon. J. G. Appel.]

House that under the mining laws persons were able to take up large areas of land as homestead leases, which they were not required to reside upon, and it was desirable in connection with such settlement that they should be compelled to reside upon those areas, and it was only under the preferential clauses of the Land Act that that course could be carried out, and it would be so carried out in connection with any land which was now offered to that department for the purpose of settlement. It was very necessary that they should add to the strength of the Geological Survey Department. The matter was now under consideration with the permanent heads of the department, and he had not the slightest doubt that a recommendation would be made to the Cabinet that it was essential that another geologist be appointed. In that respect he might mention that the services of the department were in request, not alone in connection with mining matters, but also in connection with the water supply. At the present, Mr. Dunstan's services were being availed of in the Burnett, where, owing to the dry weather conditions, there was a shortage of water. The request was made that he should inspect and report as to the possibility of water being discovered under the surface in certain portions of that district, and he (Mr. Appel) immediately made his services available for that purpose. That being so, it was considered that the strength of the department should be added to, and he felt quite satisfied that, if the recommendation was made to his colleagues, it would be accepted and adopted by them. The hon. member furthermore drew attention to matters in connection with the Scottish Gympie Goldmine. The hon. member had already drawn the attention of the department to the matter of employing long ladders in connection with stoping operations. At the time of his last visit to that mine the length of the ladders did not exceed 10 feet or 12 feet, but the hon. member said they had now been increased to something like 40 feet. Instructions had been given to the inspector to inspect and report on the matter, and hon. members could feel satisfied that if any danger existed to those who were working in that mine, action would be taken to cause that method to be discontinued. The hon. member also brought up the question of competent persons being allowed to make the necessary plans. That instruction had already been given to the warden at Gympie, and a similar instruction would be given to the wardens and mining registrars throughout the State, so that there would be no question as to those who were permitted and were competent under the Act to carry out the necessary surveys. The hon. member suggested that the mining surveyors should be permitted to carry out that private work. He must confess that he was not in favour of that. It was not a wise thing that the officers of the department should be permitted to take up private work for which they would receive fees, and later on to act officially in the matter. The officers of the department should be absolutely independent of the public, and, being of that opinion, he could not accede to the request of the hon. member in that connection. In reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Burke with regard to the warden at Gladstone receiving a larger salary than the officer at Georgetown, the

reason was that the officer at Gladstone was one of the senior officers in the service. Officers who had done many years' service in the Northern part of the State preferred to go to the Southern part, and it had been regarded as a reward for length of service. The officer at Georgetown was a junior officer, an excellent officer likewise, and no doubt when he had the same length of service as the officer at Gladstone, he would receive the same, if not a greater, salary than that officer.

Mr. FOLEY: And if he gets the ear of the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES did not think the hon. member was really honest in that interjection. The Mines Department was the one department above all others where merit told. In connection with Mr. Thomas, one of the inspectors who had been promoted and had been transferred to the Cloncurry district, that officer had absolutely no friend in the State, and yet by his own merit and tact he had succeeded in forcing himself forward in the department. Merit, and merit alone, was the test in the Mines Department, and necessarily so.

Mr. MULLAN: Is not his strong point coal?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Let him tell the hon. member that a man who was perfect in his experience and knowledge of coalmining, was capable of undertaking the inspection of any class of mine, whether it be gold or any other mineral. The junior member for Charters Towers, in advocating the claims of one of the junior inspectors, expressed the opinion that that officer was not receiving sufficient remuneration. That was the remuneration that had been fixed for junior inspectors in the department. It was considered a sufficient amount for a junior officer, and if those officers, by the merit which they exhibited, proved themselves to be capable officers, their salaries would be proportionately increased: but he strongly advised any officer of that department, or any other department, that it would be far better for them, instead of running about and voicing their capabilities to their friends—it would be far better if they showed to the permanent heads in the department that they merit an increase. The deputy leader of the Opposition urged the matter of the department undertaking the supply of portable batteries. Unfortunately, the experience of the department had not led them to believe that portable batteries were of that assistance which had been urged by hon. members on the other side.

Mr. LENNON: The department has never tried portable batteries.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: At Wollar they erected a battery, and also at Herberton and Enu Creek and other places they had assisted £1 for £1 in connection with batteries; and what had been the result?

Mr. WHITE: A waste of public money.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: An absolute waste of public money. The plants in question had been abandoned, and to-day they were lying rotting on the fields where they were put up.

Mr. MURPHY: But a portable battery would be of assistance to prospectors?

Mr. LENNON: You have never tried portable batteries.

[*Hon. J. G. Appel.*]

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The hon. member spoke about a portable battery as if it were a thing you could hitch to a team of four horses and drag it from one place to another over rough roads. Did the hon. member think it could be transported in the same manner as a travelling menagerie? (Laughter.) Had the hon. member ever seen a portable battery?

Mr. LENNON: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Then how did the hon. member propose to transport it from one place to another? He could only advise the hon. member to get a little more information on the subject, and, having got that information, he might speak a little more carefully on the question of portable batteries. Did the hon. member think he could put it in a wheelbarrow and wheel it from one camp to another? (Laughter.) Wherever the Mines Department could assist in that matter they were prepared to do so.

Mr. LENNON: Will you give me five minutes to reply?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He would point out that in connection with the application which was made by the representatives of the miners at Oaks Rush, he thought hon. members would admit that he had met them fairly in that matter, and had made them a perfectly fair and business-like offer, which, if they accepted, would give them an opportunity, under the most favourable conditions, of proving whether that was the best method of assisting the mining industry. In connection with the remarks which were made as to the Phthisis Commission, he had already pointed out that the Health Department were examining the different localities, in particular on the Central line, for the purpose of acquiring an area of Crown lands upon which a sanatorium could be erected.

Mr. THEODORE: Don't you think Herberton would be a suitable place?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Herberton would be a very excellent place, but the hon. member must recollect that in that matter they must be guided by their experts.

At 10.30 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under Standing Order No. 305, I must now leave the chair, and make my report to the House.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress; and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

NAVIGATION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council, intimating that they agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly in this Bill.

LAND SURVEYORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. E. H. Macartney, *Toorong*) moved—

"That leave be given to introduce a Bill to amend the Land Surveyors Act of 1908, by providing for the settlement of disputes between contract surveyors and any State department."

Mr. LENNON: This apparently mild pro-

posal may be loaded something like the Electric Light and Power Bill. It seems to me an extraordinary thing that a Bill should be brought in to enable district surveyors to settle their disputes with Government departments. I was not aware that surveyors were such a particularly troublesome class that they were not able to settle their disputes with the department or with anybody else. Generally speaking, they are a well-informed class of men, and I hope they are a well-remunerated class. I hope that the Minister for Lands will really take the trouble to give us a brief explanation of the object of this Bill. We are justified in asking that from the Minister, and I feel sure that he will be willing to give us a brief outline of what the Bill proposes to achieve.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have no objection whatever to give a short explanation of the Bill. The measure is one which has frequently been asked for by the associated surveyors of Queensland. There are certain matters in which differences frequently arise between the Surveyor-General and the surveyors with regard to the scale of fees and allowances which are applicable to particular work. The Surveyor-General has endeavoured to do his duty fairly in the matter in the direction of conserving the revenue of the State, but his determination has not always given satisfaction to the surveyors. The surveyors have felt that it would be a fair thing that bona fide disputes between the Surveyor-General and themselves should be submitted to a board of appeal established somewhat on the same lines as the board of appeal given to railway employees. That has been asked for on several occasions, and the Bill now introduced is brought forward in pursuance of a promise given in the past. There is a board constituted under the principal Act. That board is constituted by a certain number of members nominated by the Governor in Council, and an equal number nominated by the associated surveyors themselves, with the Surveyor-General as chairman. It is proposed by this Bill to constitute the board in a similar way, minus the Surveyor-General, whose position on the board will be filled by a police magistrate. The Bill is a very short one, and practically comprises little more than I have stated.

Mr. LENNON: Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has already spoken.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: So had the Minister.

The SPEAKER: The Minister spoke a second time in reply as the mover of the motion.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): I understood the Minister for Lands to say that this board is to be in the nature of the Railway Appeal Board.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Something of the kind.

Mr. RYAN: The Railway Appeal Board is for appeals against disallowment and that sort of thing. This, I understand, is for the settlement of disputes as to monetary payments.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Fees and allowances.

Mr. RYAN: Surely fees and allowances are arranged before the work is done.

Mr. Ryan.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are according to scale, and a rule which will apply to the physical conditions of one piece of country may not always fairly apply to another.

Mr. RYAN: Well, I suppose we shall see the Bill shortly.

Question put and passed.

FIRST READING.

The Bill was presented, read a first time, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PRICKLY-PEAR DESTRUCTION BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS moved—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to authorise the making of agreements for the freeing of Crown land infested with prickly pear, and for the grant or other disposal of such land when freed, and for other purposes in connection therewith."

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranou*): I think that the Minister for Lands should give us some information as to what this Bill contains.

The PREMIER: The proper time for that information is to-morrow, when the House goes into Committee.

Mr. MULLAN: We will conduct our business in our own way.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: We do not know what this amending Bill involves. Last session we passed a very comprehensive consolidated Land Bill, dealing with prickly-pear clearing and other matters in connection with freeholds and leaseholds. Here we have the Minister for Lands, hardly warm in his seat at the Lands Office, coming down with an amending Bill. Why, with the number of pear clauses in the Land Act passed last year they should be tested first. There was hardly time to put the clauses into force. Crown lands infested with pear under lease were being sweated, land that should be resumed under the resumption provisions of the Land Bill was not being resumed, and here, if one is to judge what this proposal contains, there is a proposal to make an arrangement—of course I am anticipating the Bill, Mr. Speaker—but from what I read of the Bill here one of the proposals in it is to give away land or make some agreement as to the disposal of pear-covered lands. Personally, I object to bartering lands, whether to leaseholders or any other holders, for clearing pear off them. If that is what the Bill proposes to do, we should know more about it before we go any further with it. I do not see why we should waste the time of the House in considering such a proposal as that. At any rate, I think we are entitled to learn something about this measure. The House gave a lot of time last session to the consideration of land legislation. I think, at least, that we ought to give that legislation an opportunity of being tested, and see if it is worth retaining or not before we start amending it. If the Minister has got some reason to give us as to why it should be amended, he should not be afraid to give it. Let the House know something about the proposal, and if we like it

we will not mind the Bill being printed. I think that the House is entitled to ask for that information.

The SPEAKER: I do not like to interrupt the hon. member, but I would point out that this is the stage where the House decides the necessity for going into Committee to consider the desirability of introducing the Bill. When the House goes into Committee that is the time when hon. members should say whether it is desirable to introduce it or not.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I understand that the House is being asked for leave to go into Committee to consider the desirability of introducing such a measure, but I do not think that the House should waste time going into Committee to consider such a measure unless we know what the proposal is that we are asked to deal with. The Minister should justify a resolution of this sort. So far as this resolution is concerned there is no justification for it whatever from my point of view. The consolidating Land Bill which was passed last session meets the case so far as we know. The Minister has not told us yet if they have not met the case, or if it is necessary to bring in a measure of this sort. We have not been told anything at all. Here is a resolution on the paper, and the Minister simply gets up and moves a resolution, asking us whether we will go into Committee to consider the desirability of introducing the measure. We do not know whether it is desirable or not.

Mr. MORGAN: We consider that it is desirable.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The hon. gentleman can speak for himself. We are entitled to learn some reason from the Minister why it is proposed to bring in amending legislation on the legislation of last session. At any rate, this House does not want to waste its time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I am very pleased to hear hon. gentlemen opposite say so. It is not often we get an encore from that side of the House at this time of night, as they are generally away asleep somewhere. I am glad to see that members opposite are very much alive to-night. I hope that they will see the necessity of ascertaining from the Minister what is the proposal of the Government in connection with this Bill before the House goes into Committee to waste any time.

Mr. MURPHY: For some considerable time past members on both sides of the House have been urging on the Government to take steps to deal with the prickly pear. (Hear, hear!) And on all occasions when this matter was brought up the Government were urged to do something. Now they are proposing to do something.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY: Whether the proposal which they intend to submit to the House will be acceptable or not, is a matter for future consideration. We will deal with the proposals of the Government in connection with prickly pear when these proposals are submitted to us. (Hear, hear!) When leave is given to go into Committee to deal with the question, if I desire any information I shall ask the Minister for it then.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: You have not always acted in that way.

Mr. MURPHY: I have not always acted as properly as I am acting to-night. (Laugh-

|*Mr. Ryan.*

ter.) We ask the Government to do a certain thing in connection with this matter, and when they propose to do something we should at least see what that proposal is and whether it is acceptable to the House or not. We will come to that decision when we see the measure of relief which is to be proposed.

Mr. RYAN: It is rather refreshing to hear the hon. member for Croydon from the cross bench making an apology for the Government. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MURPHY: I am apologising for you people. (Laughter.)

Mr. RYAN: We do not need the assistance of the hon. member for Croydon to apologise for this party. There is something in this resolution which I think is against the principle and the platform which the hon. member for Croydon once signed—that is, with regard to the granting of Crown lands. I understand that he is in favour of that, as this resolution provides for the granting of Crown land.

Mr. MORGAN: We grant Crown lands now for pear.

Mr. RYAN: If anyone reads the resolution they will see that it is to provide for the granting of Crown lands or other disposal of them. We do not believe in the granting of Crown lands. We believe in leaseshold, and the hon. member for Croydon once signed the platform to that effect.

Mr. MURPHY: Can't I oppose it at the Committee stage?

Mr. RYAN: Of course; the hon. member can do just what he likes. He has only to answer to the electors outside for that. I am merely pointing out the fact that when the Minister presents a resolution of this kind to the House, he has a right to give some information about that resolution; otherwise why is the resolution to be moved? We are asked whether we will give leave or not for the Bill to be introduced. In order to form an intelligent conclusion on that matter, it is as well to hear argument, and it would be well if the Secretary for Public Lands would give some information such as was indicated by the hon. member for Maranoa with regard to this proposal first. The hon. member for Maranoa pointed out that only last year we passed a consolidating Land Bill, which was then in charge of the present Chief Secretary, and which, I may say, was a very excellent measure, in advance of the previous laws. We have scarcely passed that Act, when there is a proposal to give away grants of freehold. I am contemplating that it is to grant freehold. In order that the House may form an intelligent conclusion before we give that leave, it is due to the House that the Minister should rise in his place and give us some information as to what is the purport of this Bill. There are many other important measures that we have to get through, and we want to decide whether we shall allow this Bill to be introduced, or whether we shall deal with the measures which have been foreshadowed. So far as I am personally concerned, I want to proceed with the Liquor Bill.

The PREMIER: This Bill was foreshadowed.

Mr. RYAN: Possibly it was, but what we desire to know is what is the ambit of this measure? What does it propose to

do? The mere fact that such a resolution is necessary shows that it is for some purpose in connection with the measure. We are allowed to speak upon it. Every member of the House is allowed to speak upon it for the purpose of gaining information and for the purpose of intelligently deciding whether or not leave shall be granted to introduce this measure. It might be that we will decide not to allow it to be introduced, and there is an end of it; or, on the other hand, we may allow the resolution to be passed and go into Committee to consider the desirability of introducing it. I think the Minister will be well advised if he accedes to the reasonable request of the hon. member for Maranoa and also takes the advice of a great many members on this side, notwithstanding the objection of the hon. member for Croydon.

The PREMIER: I think it will be found more convenient to go into Committee to ascertain the outstanding features of the Bill. The Bill deals with a problem that could not be comprised within the cover of the ordinary legislation affecting alienation of our Crown lands. There is no problem as serious as that of the prickly pear. We are seeking to deal with prickly pear by various methods in the ordinary way of selection. Hon. members who are accustomed to going into certain districts know that there are areas of land that no man will look at under any conditions. We have offered bonuses up to £2 and £3 an acre in some instances, but even then we failed to induce men to take up those areas. This is not a loaded measure at all. It is a Bill to give the Secretary for Lands power to enter into special contracts for the clearing of areas of land which are heavily infested with pear, which land may then pass out to selectors under our ordinary Crown lands provisions. I am quite satisfied that if hon. members will realise the seriousness of the prickly-pear problem they will join with the Government in passing any measure which will accomplish that end.

Mr. COYNE: Why don't you engage some of the unemployed immigrants to clear it?

The PREMIER: They can find something more profitable. We should do everything we possibly can to cope with the pest. When the Bill is in Committee, or when it reaches the second-reading stage, if the good sense of the Committee or of the House, as the case may be, does not consider the proposals of the Government likely to accomplish the end we have in view, we can lay it aside, and we shall not be in the least distressed other than that we shall feel that another means of perhaps overcoming this terrible pest will have passed away from us. We have no proposals at the present time. When I was Secretary for Lands I had several propositions, and had special agreements made, one of the conditions in them being that they must be ratified by Parliament before they could materialise; but none of them materialised. This Bill will place the Minister in a position to make agreements. I hope hon. members will take a reasonable view and will agree to see the Bill before they begin to object to it.

Mr. COYNE (Warrego): I think it is just as well to hear a little more about the measure at this stage. There are large numbers of people in Queensland and throughout

Mr. Coyne.]

Australia at the present time who are attempting to devise some means for coping with this terrible pest that we have in this State. They have it also in New South Wales, but not to as great an extent as we have it in Queensland. In my own district there is a man who claims to have invented a very cheap way of dealing with the pear, and I understand there are a great many others throughout the Commonwealth who claim to have invented other cheap methods of dealing with it, and it is a fact that a large number of people are engaged in trying to invent something that will destroy the pest. I think it is very unwise to propose to give grants of land infested with pear to anybody when, within the next twelve months, some cheap means of coping with the pest may be invented. A short time ago a very wealthy firm proposed to take up large tracts of prickly pear infested land with a view of ascertaining whether the pear could not be turned into some commercial commodity. The House safeguarded itself on that occasion by providing that any such agreement would have to be ratified by Parliament. In this case the whole thing may be done by an Executive minute, and I think it is unwise at this stage in our career, when at any time a means of destroying the pear may be invented, to allow large tracts of practically desert country, which may be turned into fertile fields, to pass into private hands. I object to leave being given to introduce this Bill.

Question put and passed.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said: I beg to move—

"That the House will, on Thursday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to consolidate and amend the Agricultural Bank Acts, 1901 to 1905."

Mr. RYAN: Say a few words about it.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: This is a small measure of about nineteen clauses, which makes a number of changes in the present Agricultural Bank Act.

Mr. MATHIAS: Is it based on the Western Australian Act?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: To a great extent it is based on the Western Australian Act. It also makes provision for giving the holders of mining homesteads the same rights under the Act as agricultural farm selectors. It also proposes to remove several defects that have been found in the course of the administration of the Act, and it is very much more liberal than the present Act in regard to advances to new settlers.

Mr. LENNON: I am glad the Minister for Agriculture, unlike some other Ministers, has been gracious enough to volunteer a little information regarding this

[11 p.m.] measure. We all know that the Agricultural Bank is swathed in red tape, and I am sorry the hon. gentleman did not go a little further and inform us whether he proposes to continue the present system of having trustees, or whether the

[*Mr. Coyne.*]

manager is to have the powers of a bank manager and not be treated like a clerk to the trustees.

The PREMIER: The management will be entirely altered.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I am glad this Bill has been brought out of the box at last. When we get into Committee on the Bill I hope we shall be able to make an improvement on the Western Australian Act, which is not quite so liberal as it might be. Is it the intention of the Government to in any way liberalise the regulations, because the present Act is very much better than the regulations?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There will be new regulations.

Mr. MULCAHY: I am pleased to hear from the Minister that he is going to place the tenure peculiar to mining on the same footing, I understand, as freeholds.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so.

Mr. MULCAHY: I suggested that on the Address in Reply, and he then promised that he would give the matter consideration. It will give satisfaction to mining people generally to have mining tenures put on the same footing as freeholds.

Mr. ALLEN: I would like to get some further information from the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot speak again.

Mr. ALLEN: I hope some other occupant of the Treasury bench will give the information I desire. I would like to see the provisions of the Bill made more adaptable to grazing farms. Up to the present, except in one or two isolated instances, the bank has been of absolutely no benefit to the grazing farmers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You are wrong there.

Mr. ALLEN: I am not wrong, because a number of them have complained to me about it. I hope that when the Bill has been in operation twelve months we shall find that the small men making a start on grazing areas will be able to get cheap money. Another point is the limit of the advances made. Our limit is £200, and in Western Australia it was £750. I think the advance that can be made in New South Wales is £2,000; and in Western Australia the Government sworn in during the last seven days promises £1,500. I would like information on that point. They are going to raise the amount for workers' dwellings from £300 to £500 in the new Bill; but the grazing farmer needs more than a dwelling, and will need a much greater advance. The grazing farmers are willing to give the best security; and I hope the Bill will provide for a much larger advance than is allowed now—at least equal to the proposal to be included in the new Bill to be introduced this session in Western Australia. That is all I have to say. I feel sure that the Minister will in other respects do away with a lot of the hidebound regulations that have been detrimental in the past. In the interests of the small settlers in grazing areas I hope the amount advanced will be larger.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is repeating himself.

Mr. ALLEN: I think you have always found that I have accepted your warning,

and you have never had to speak to me a third time. Anyhow, the slip was only made in summarising. I hope some member of the Treasury bench will give the information I want.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*): I would like some information, too. When the Agricultural Bank Act was passed, it was supposed that it would assist the small farmer in getting advances; and the small settlers in the district I represent were looking forward to the time when they would be able to get money at about 5 per cent., instead of going to the banks and having to pay 8 per cent. The amount of the advance in itself was very small, but still it was sufficient in some instances for small settlers. There is a great deal of delay, sometimes months, before a definite reply is received in respect to an advance, and then it is often refused. That costs £1 10s., and in the end they had to go to private banks.

The SPEAKER: I must point out that the hon. member is dealing with administration of the past Act, not with the question whether it was a wise thing to introduce into Committee an amending Bill. I hope he will not discuss the administration of the past Act.

Mr. LAND: It is not my intention to discuss the Act, but I want to know whether this measure is a better measure than the one which is now on the statute-books, and I understood that this was the proper time to ask for the information, and the information should be given.

The SPEAKER: I would point out to the hon. member that the present motion is to go into Committee to consider the desirability of introducing such a measure. You have to go into Committee to do so, and in Committee any question may be asked and the whole question discussed there. The question at present is: Is it desirable to go into Committee to consider the desirability of introducing a Bill to amend the Agricultural Land Bank Act, or is it not?

Mr. LAND: I quite understand that; but we are asked if it is advisable to introduce a measure.

The PREMIER: Is it advisable to amend the Bill.

Mr. LAND: There are members on the front Treasury bench who can give me the information I want. I want to know whether I am justified in voting for or against this measure. If it is not a suitable amendment I should vote against it, and I am justified in asking for this information.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: In speaking about the desirability of this House going into Committee to amend the Agricultural Bank Act, I would remind the House that the Commonwealth Government are going in for a great banking system. Will it be advisable for this State to go in for any kind of banking, in view of the fact that it can be so comprehensively done by the Federal system? Is it advisable, in view of the competition which our bank would meet with from the Commonwealth bank? I do not wish to offer any objection to the amendment of the Act.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow, after the formal business, will be the consideration of the Mary Valley Railway in Committee. Then we will proceed with the Liquor Bill.

Mr. LENNON: Perhaps the Chief Secretary might be in a position now to let me know, or let the House know, if he has heard anything in regard to the unemployed workers at Toowoomba?

The PREMIER: Immediately I got the telegram from the hon. gentleman I sent it on to the Under Secretary, with a request that he would communicate with Toowoomba, and get all the details in case of relief being needed. I have not received a reply yet.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past 11 o'clock.
